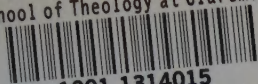


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# FIVE MINUTE SHOP-TALKS

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HALFORD E. LUCCOCK



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## **Five-Minute Shop-Talks**





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By  
HALFORD E. LUCCOCK



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## Preface

**T**HE most interesting congregation in America meets every working day at the call of the noon whistle. Its place of assembly is the shop or mill or street car barn, wherever the men come together for lunch. Its only pews are work benches and packing boxes. Its only ritual is the courtesy of quiet attention. Its only sacrament is the hand-clasp of friendship.

The number of noonday meetings in thousands of shops throughout the country, organized and conducted by the industrial department of the Y. M. C. A., church federations and individual churches and ministers, is constantly increasing. It is an encouraging sign that the church is growing more and more awake to a superb opportunity of community extension.

This audience of workingmen is a very critical one. It has a deeply rooted antipathy to two things in the speaker who undertakes to address it—patronage and cant. Let but the slightest trace of affectation, of conscious superiority, or of a simpering “talking down” to the men be felt in a speaker, and his usefulness is entirely over

in that shop. The shop audience makes high demands of those who seek to win its confidence. It demands thorough democracy and sincerity. It demands, also, that its attention be *won* and it must be won usually against absolute indifference on the part of the men. Pious commonplaces are a vain thing for safety when one faces the crowd in the shop at the noon hour!

Yet, if one is able to put pertinent truth in a form so original as to compel attention, and in language simple, direct and colloquial, and still at all times dignified, he will be given a ready hearing. So long as honesty and good-will make themselves felt in his words, he need never fear to give the strongest message he has, and the one that cuts deepest into his audience. The men will listen to it and in most cases be glad to get it. It is the conviction of the writer that it is as rewarding work as a man may ever do.

The chapters which follow are records of an attempt to "fill the pulpit" at a neighboring shop during a recent winter. They are presented in the hope that they may prove suggestive to others in the same work, and possibly lead new recruits into this promising field of service.

H. E. L.

*Madison, New Jersey.*

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## I

### Four Pairs of Eyes

ONE night I was sitting out on the deck of a steamer which was coming back to New York from Panama. The construction work on the great canal had been finished and the ship was bringing a large number of men who had been working on the canal back to the United States. Some had been down in Panama for five years and had a right to wear the gold watch fob of the Canal Commission as a mark of honor for five years' service. It was a decoration any man might be proud of, for it was about the most stupendous piece of work ever done on earth, and it was a credit to have had anything to do with it. Some others had been away from the United States for two, three or four years. They were all glad to be getting home.

When the lights of New York began to be visible from the deck that evening, there was a great deal of excitement on board. Every one was glad that the morning would see them landed on their own native soil again.

As I circulated around the deck and listened to different men telling just what they were going to do when they landed, and why they were glad to see the lights, I came to see that the city meant something different to every one of them and that they lived in a different world.

Looking out over the rail of the ship, one man said to me, "Gee, I'll be glad to strike little old New York again. You can't get a decent cocktail down in Panama to save your life. It was fierce. I'm glad to get home." That was what the lights meant to him. They were nothing but the shining lights of a big barroom, and the principal thing he was glad of was the chance of what he called "a decent drink." He looked out on life through the bottom of a whiskey glass.

Another man was saying, "The first thing I am going to look for in New York is a good show. I haven't been in a regular theatre in four years. The white lights of Broadway look pretty good to me." The lights of the city as they sparkled miles away were all footlights to him.

I was talking to another man, a square-shouldered, clean-cut young fellow, who had a new job waiting for him in the city. His engineering experience on the canal had



secured him a good position in the subway construction in New York, and very naturally he was glad to get back because it meant a change of work and a better salary and a chance of advancement, reason enough for any one being glad. The city to him was a place in which to work.

There was another man on the boat—a doctor. He had been in the government hospital at Colon for three years, and with the experience he had had down there under new conditions, he had learned some new things about a certain kind of disease which were not definitely known before, how to treat it and how to prevent it. He was going back to take a place in a New York hospital where he could use his discoveries for the benefit of the people of the United States. To him the city meant a chance to serve and do good.

I have often thought of the conversations which I had with those four men that night. Here were four different men whose offhand talk about themselves indicated rather clearly four different ways of looking at life in general. Each revealed, without meaning to do so, what was the big thing in life to him. To the first man, whose heart grew warm when he thought of a cocktail, the big thing

in life was the gratification of appetite. To the second, it was a matter of having a good time. To the third, it was a well paying job. To the last, it was the ability and opportunity to render service.

I pass on this question to you :—What is the main thing in life to you? Which one of these four fellows do you like best, or which one do you resemble most?

Now, of course, when one of these things is the one we care about most, it does not mean that we do not care about the others. The only question is, which one we put first. We will cut out the first man, the one who cares most about his appetite. He is too much like the hog that lives for what it eats and drinks and nothing else. But the man who wants to have a good time is after an important and valuable thing. Every one ought to have a good time, and the problem of good recreation, and enough of it, is one that deserves a great deal of attention. It not only gives pleasure but keeps a man in fighting trim. It is an important part of a man's life. But is it big enough to be his main purpose?

So with a man's work. The man who looked at the city as a chance of gain and advancement was all right so far. It is that

to any man who is worth his salt. More than that, even when a man's desire is to serve, he will not be able to help very much until he has learned to do some one thing well, and has made a place for himself. But, granting all that, merely to push himself along is too small for the main aim of a man's life.

The doctor was the biggest man of the crowd. He wasn't an angel. He was human. He liked a good time and he had one. He cared about making his way in the world, and he was making it. But beyond that he cared about making himself count for something to others and leaving things a little better than he found them. And from the way he talked, I had an idea he managed to have a better time out of it than any of the other three. It usually works out that way.

## II

### “Money Talks”

**W**HENEVER a man tells us that “money talks” he says something decidedly true. It may not be true in just the way he means it, but it is true, nevertheless. And it is well worth our realizing how true it is. It is not true in the way it is frequently said, that a man has no right to an opinion unless he is willing to bet about it. Putting up a dollar never made a thing a bit truer since the world began and never will. It is a foolish, childish way of expressing an opinion. Some men are too lazy to *think* about a question, so they *bet* about it. It is less of a strain on what they call their mind.

Nevertheless, in more important ways, nothing talks more clearly and loudly about a man than his money. A man's money *does* talk about him day and night and it usually tells the truth and spares nothing. A man's words may lie, his face may lie, his manners may lie; but his money and the way he spends it fairly shout to the world all

there is to be known about the kind of man he is.

There used to be a song a few years ago which had this for a chorus: "If money talks, all it ever said to me was 'Good Bye.'" I suppose it is true sometimes. Some men find it as hard to keep hold of a dollar as they would of a hot coal. Before their money gets a chance to say, "How do you do?" and make itself a little bit at home, it is gone. But whenever it leaves in a hurry that way it always says just a little bit more. It adds, "You're a six-year-old child. You can't place a future benefit ahead of the present, any more than an infant. You need a guardian." It is not very pleasant to have your money talk back to you that way. Especially when you know it is true.

Your money is a great big tell-tale. It is *you* yourself—in expression—your personality, your likes, desires and ambitions, carved in silver. You simply can't keep a dollar or a dime quiet. When it is not talking to you saying, "Come on, do this or do that," it is telling tales about you by the way it is spent.

I know a man whose money talks to him like this: It says, "I own you. Hurry up there and slave for me. You have no rights

for yourself. You belong to me." It tells the truth. His money does not belong to him. He belongs to his money. It owns him. He has worked for it alone, and worked for it so long that he can do nothing else. The real deity he worships and the only one, is the Goddess carved on a dollar. You may remember the old fairy story of the man who had an enchanted purse from which he could take out one gold coin after another as long as he wanted to, but he could never use any of the money until he threw the purse away. He kept telling himself for years that he would keep the purse for only one more day, but he finally died a ragged beggar with the purse in his hands, without ever having used a cent. It is a true fairy story to-day in many cases of men to whom the chase of a dollar becomes the whole of life.

Sometimes a five dollar bill in a man's pocket keeps yelling so loud that he can't hear anything else, "Come on, you've got me in your pocket. Why bother about anything else? Have a good time! Enjoy yourself!" We have all heard our money talk like that, and it talks loud and persuasively. We never get very far until we learn to talk back to it like a man and tell it to keep



still ; that we are the boss of ourselves and not the five dollar bill the boss of us. When our money talks like that to us, the best thing to do is to sentence it to a few months of solitary confinement in a dark cell in some savings bank. That will teach it to know its place, all right.

Money not only talks to the man who has it in his pocket ; it talks to other people when it is spent and tells all kinds of things about him. How would you like a dollar to go around telling this about you : “ The man who just spent me is a hog. He looks like a man and talks like a man, but if you could tear the mask off and see what really is on the inside, you would find something a good deal like a prize Berkshire hog.” Now honestly, would a man who spends most of his money just filling himself up, without much care for others, have a right to say that the dollar didn’t tell the truth ? Of course, he does not use the same kind of things that the Berkshire hog delights in, but the idea is much the same when you get down to the bottom of it.

Once in a while money dropped on the counter says this : “ I was spent by a man a good deal like a peacock. His money goes for show, and just as a peacock likes to

spread its tail and show all its fine feathers, this man who spent me likes to spread his feathers, too. His money all goes for the outside; he likes to be known as a 'swell dresser.' He is mostly 'front' and bluff. Really, if you cut him open you would not find much more than is on the inside of a dummy in a tailor's show window."

Fortunately, lots of money has better things to say about the man who spends it than that. Millions of dollars spent every day in the grocery store, the clothing store, the real estate office, says something like this: "I was spent by a man big enough to care for a square deal for his home; big enough to find joy in the comfort and pleasure of his family. The man who shoved me across the counter isn't a masquerade. He is the genuine article." Your dollar that goes to the welfare association, charity or church, says right out loud to every one, "Here is a chap who believes in the Golden Rule."

At Christmas time—in the stores and on the streets, money does not merely talk. It *sings*. It sings—"I believe in good will, in kindness, in unselfishness." Its song makes every one glad and boosts a little higher up our belief in the goodness of folks.

You can't stop your money from talking, no matter what you do. Even if you try to shut it up by keeping it all in your pocket, it talks all the louder. It tells every one that you are a crusty old "tight-wad." Why not teach it to say the right things about you as it rings on the counter, the things you are not ashamed to have it say? A dollar has a very different ring as it falls on a bar from the ring it has when it goes across the counter for a sack of flour. It is telling a different story about you. Just listen to the next one you spend and hear what it says.

### III

#### A Man's Man

A FEW days after the Mayor of Toledo, Ohio, Samuel L. Jones, died, I happened to be stopping in the city. The impression I received from talking with a great many citizens was that most of the people in the city felt that they had lost a friend. They had a good-natured nickname for him and called him "Golden Rule Jones." The thing I heard people say about him most was this—"He was a Man's Man." It sounded good to me and I asked several people what they meant by it. The general idea seemed to be that the qualities he had were ones that appealed to *men*, and all kinds of men. He was strong, both in body and will; open and frank and sympathetic; he had no bluff or pose about him, and while his best friends admitted that he made many mistakes, they were honest mistakes which had no intention of trick or deceit in them; they came more from being

headstrong than from cowardice, and he was big enough to own up to mistakes when he saw them.

It is as well-wearing a tribute as a man can ever get: "A Man's Man." It is better than all the badges and medals and uniforms that were ever manufactured. A good many men have richly earned it. Lincoln was "A Man's Man." All kinds of men admire him and reverence him, white and black, rich and poor, north and south, American and European. Henry Watterson said of him, "He was the North, the South, the East, the West, the thrall, the master, all of us in one." He was as gentle as a woman and as tender-hearted as a child. But it came from strength, not from weakness. He had a grip like a bulldog. He never gave up his purpose to please any majority. He had no tricks of manner or flattery. The poor man who went to see him about a boy condemned to be shot was given as much attention as a foreign ambassador. People who began by making fun of his awkward walk and the bad fit of his clothes ended up by paying admiration to the strong, sincere soul beneath the clothes. They came to believe, as Bobbie Burns sang :

“ What though on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hodden gray, and a' that?  
Gi'e fools their silks and knaves their wine,  
A man's a Man for a' that.”

“ For a' that, and a' that,  
Their tinsel show and a' that  
The honest man, tho' e'er so poor,  
Is king o' men for a' that.”

It was much the same with that leader on the other side of the Civil War—Robert E. Lee. Lee was raised in very different circumstances from Lincoln. He belonged to an old aristocratic Virginia family. He had wealth and a fine education. His manner was courtly and dignified. But the outside elegance was only the covering of a heart as open and friendly and sympathetic as Lincoln's. He captured the liking of his military foes as well as that of his own soldiers.

No one ever so well deserved the title of “a man's man” as the One whose name is the best known of any man who ever lived—Jesus Christ. Centuries ago some one called Him “the first true gentleman who ever lived.” A Japanese statesman who read the story of Jesus in the Bible for the first time in his life when he was about fifty years old, was asked what was the chief impression he got of Jesus from his reading. He answered



at once, "His courage." It is very unfortunate that the world has had the idea of the gentleness and kindness of Jesus so much emphasized that the other side of Him, His rugged strength and fearless courage, is sometimes forgotten. There is a kind of impression about among people who have only heard of Him at second hand that He was kind of a woman's man, loving and sympathetic, but a little weak.

No one who really knows Jesus ever thinks of Him in that way. He proved His right to the leadership of the strongest men because He feared absolutely nothing. He wanted to win men to His cause and to Himself, but He was no "trimmer." He never kept back the truth to make Himself popular. He told the powerful crowd of religious "bosses" of His day right to their faces again and again that they were all wrong. "You care about outward things," He told them, "ceremonies and processions and clothes, and all the time your hearts are wrong. Outside ceremonies do not count for anything. Justice and righteousness and unselfishness are the only things that count." No wonder they killed Him. He was spoiling their influence. He was persuading people to believe in a religion of clean living

and right acting, open to all on equal terms, and they did not like to be told that ordinary folks were just as valuable in God's sight as the Highest High Priest of the Jews. He stood before the highest power in the world—Rome—with His life in His hands, and never took back a word. He was glad to die for the truth He had spoken in His life. Do you call that *weak*?

He appealed to men because He *believed* in men. No one was ever too far "down and out" for Jesus to believe in his possibilities. The worst charge His enemies could make against Him was that He was the Friend of Sinners. These people, whom His enemies regarded as the "riff-raff," the "scum of the earth," were the people He sought out to be His friends. No one ever found Him too busy to help them. Many a man first came to believe in himself because Jesus believed in him. He called out the best things in men into life and action, and through His friendship and belief they became new men. He did not seek to associate with the people from whom He could *get* something. He was too busy on the lookout for the man to whom He could *give* something.

His *sincerity* drew all kinds of men. He

had no pose which He put on before the crowd and took off when no one was around. He had no corners in His life which must be hid from the public gaze. He won no man's allegiance by stage tricks and deceptions. He put the hard things about His way of life before men's eyes. He never pretended that following Him was an easy thing, a sort of picnic. It was hard. It meant taking up a cross and ministering to others. But He said it was worth while and that no other plan was big enough for a man's life. His religion was an open, straightforward, practical one of *deeds*. He had no use for frills and pretenses. He cared only about the real thing—the inner motives and purposes of the heart.

One of the surest proofs of Jesus being the "man's man" above all others, is to look at the men He has mastered. Jesus weak? Look at the men of all time who have called Him Master and have tried to follow Him. If we should start to call the roll we would soon have a company of the strongest, keenest leaders of men that the world has known, Cromwell, Gladstone, Lincoln, Gordon, Luther and a thousand others. You get into good company when you join the ranks of the men who have acknowledged

Jesus as a Master and have tried to follow Him.

“ If Jesus Christ is a man  
And only a man, I say  
That of all mankind  
I will follow Him  
And to Him will I cleave alway.

“ If Jesus Christ is a God  
And the only God, I swear  
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,  
The earth, the sea and the air.”

## IV

### Siamese Twins

**P**T. BARNUM, the greatest showman who ever lived, once brought to this country a pair of Siamese twins. They travelled all over the United States as a part of "the greatest show on earth," as he used to call it, and were seen by millions of wondering people. Perhaps some of you may have seen them. They were two young men, twins, whose bodies were joined together at the waist in such a manner that it would have meant death to separate them, so they had to live their lives as two men, yet joined inseparably, living together all the time. It was the only case of such a freak of nature ever known and its strangeness excited almost a world-wide curiosity.

In addition to the feeling of curiosity in the minds of those who looked at them, nearly every one thought of the great discomforts and inconveniences such a manner of life would have, never being able to escape for a single moment from the man at his side who

was almost a part of him. When one of them got sleepy and wanted to go to bed, while the other wanted to sit up and read, they had to settle in some way what they were going to do, for they both had to do the same. I imagine there were a good many hours of discussion over that very point. It would never do to get "mad," and quarrel about a thing like that, although they did have a good many discussions about which one should give in to the other. If one of them got hungry, the other had to go with him while he got something to eat. One might want to go to a ball game while the other wanted to go fishing and it would always end up by one of them doing something he did not want to do. One might want to go out for a walk when the other was tired and wanted to sit down. Neither could have any secrets or private life, for they both had to meet the same people and hear the same conversation.

We are all glad we are not Siamese Twins. It would be a terrible thing to have to live all the time with another man from whom we could never get away for an hour. And yet is there not something a good deal like that in the simple fact that every man has to live with *himself*? Every one has to live with



the man inside of himself—whom no one else ever sees or ever really *knows* but whom he knows and from whom he can never get away. There is nothing exaggerated in saying that there is another man inside of every one of us, very different from the man that the world sees and whom no one really knows but ourselves. We must come back finally from the society of every company of associates to the society of ourselves, and the question of our happiness depends on the kind of a companion the man inside of us makes for each one of us. *Every man's inner self is his Siamese Twin* to whom he is bound for life and from whom it is useless to try to escape. Some one asked why a certain man always had such a miserable time, no matter where he went, and he was answered in this way, "Poor fellow, he has to take himself with him wherever he goes!" It is true. The man inside was glum and selfish and full of regrets and it is small wonder he had a bad time with such a companion. We use the phrase, "enjoy yourself" and it is a true one, for a man can never really enjoy anything but *himself*. All outside materials for enjoyment are of no use if the man himself, in his inmost nature, is discontented, envious or mean.

If you were to be cast for the rest of your life on a desert island and had the privilege of taking one man to go with you to be your only companion, I think you would be very careful about the one you chose. You would want a man who was "good company"; one who had a cheerful disposition and a forward-looking nature. You would be sure to get a man you could trust, one you did not need to watch for fear he would do you a bad turn if he got the chance. You would surely pick an unselfish man, who would share up on whatever cocoanuts he might find on the island, for a stingy man is always mighty poor company. Most of all, you would pick a clean, decent sort of man. Now, if it would be worth while to take such care to get the best sort of a man to live with on an island, isn't it a lot more worth while to make sure we are creating that sort of a man in ourselves, with whom we have to live?

A great deal more important for my happiness than what kind of a house I live in, clothes I wear, or job I work at, is the kind of a man I am *myself*. The thoughts I have, the desires I hold,—these things are my Siamese twin—tied to me for good and all. It is a hard thing when a man cannot really respect his inner self; it spoils everything

else for him. But there are many men in that bad fix. Here are the strong words of a man who had discovered that "the fellow inside" of him was no good. He calls it "The Beaten Will"—

"How I despise these leaky boots,  
This seedy hat—this ink-seamed coat,  
These trousers where the knees rub through,  
And this frayed clout about my throat.  
These signals of distress I loathe  
But more than these, far more, I hate  
The thing they clothe.

"I hate the members impotent,  
The poltroon hand that droppeth tool;  
The eyes that drown in futile tears,  
The limp lax tongue still rasps me 'fool.'  
All this where never a shadow or hint  
Of God's resplendent image hovers,  
But more, far more, I hate the thing  
The body covers."

There is nothing so important as to make out of this Siamese Twin of your real self, your own best friend, a man you need never be ashamed of, one fit to live with.

## V

### The Working Tools of Life

**W**HAT is the real difference between a man and any of the other animals on earth? We all know that man is at the head of the animal kingdom, but just what one thing can we pick out that a man does that no other animal can do?

We might say that a man is the animal that *thinks*. That, of course, is the biggest reason for his superiority. But some other animals do some kind of thinking. A man said to me the other day, "If everybody had as much common sense as my dog, it would be a good thing." Perhaps there is a good deal of truth in what he says. It is always a compliment when we say of a man that he has good "horse sense."

We might say—Man is the animal that *talks*. That is perfectly true. Yet a good many animals communicate with each other in a manner much like talking. Birds do it and monkeys and apes have a pretty well developed language. A man studied the lan-

guage of monkeys a few years ago in Central Africa and succeeded in learning several hundred different sounds, each with a meaning of its own.

Neither of these is quite satisfactory nor is the other difference which might be suggested—Man is the only animal that *laughs*. That is not definite enough, for all animals play and the noise that they make while doing it is a good deal like a laugh.

Some people have said : Man is a *tool-using animal*, and while there may be some animals which use a kind of tool, like monkeys throwing clubs at cocoanut trees, man is the only animal that deliberately makes tools and it is one of the most important things he does. We measure the civilization men have made by the kind of tools they use, and call different periods of history the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron, Steam or Electric Age.

All our industrial prosperity rests on the tool maker. When men discover a new tool such as steam or electricity, they make a new world. The man who knows how to make and use tools is the foundation on which the progress, convenience and safety of our modern society rests. More than that—the man who has learned a trade, who knows

how to handle tools with skill and efficiency, has had a valuable training for the mind as well as the hand. He can build, make, do something. He is a trained producer and may well be proud of it.

Yet a man is not a machine. His main purpose is always a bigger one than merely making *things*. "What do I get out of it for myself?" is always a big question and a fair one. We care not only what we get paid in money for our skill, but what it brings us in return in the way of success, happiness and pleasure. To manufacture these things, which, after all, are the big things, we have to learn to use a different set of tools—not the working tools of the shop or mill, but the every-day working tools of life, the tools by which we construct our own happiness and character. It is not enough for us to know how to handle the tools of our trade with intelligence; we must learn to use the tools of life—health, will power and heart. For many a man can build an engine or a fine building, who has made a sorry, bungling mess out of the job of building a life. Some of the finest buildings in the United States were designed by a man who was a leader in his profession. He could use the tools of his trade with a skill possessed by few. Yet he never learned

the finer skill of using the larger tools for making a good job out of his life. People despised him as a low-grade indecent man, and he left a name to be ashamed of.

Here are three delicate tools for the task of shaping a successful life—your body, your will, and your heart. You have to know how to use them all.

Your *body* is the first one. If we never learn how to use our body rightly, we make a failure, no matter how much salary we get or what place we hold. It is a delicate piece of machinery ; gets out of order easily ; and when we have spoiled it by wrong handling, like some clumsy apprentice with an expensive tool, blunted its edge or slowed it down, we have lost a large part of the possibility of happiness and success. Both the enjoyment of health and the ability to do good work depend on our keeping the body in "fighting trim." We put it out of gear by wrong use, by intemperance, both of eating and drinking, late hours and dissipation. Some men try to nerve themselves for a particular piece of work by what they call a "Pick-me-up," only to find it a "Throw-me-down" at the critical time. When the long strain comes, they are simply "not there." The frequent end is that they leave the workman's bench,

to join the standing army of the "unemployables." They are bunglers with their most important tool.

Behind an efficient body there must be a strong *will*. Behind a chisel you need a mallet to give it force and direction. A chisel, without another tool to drive it, is worth nothing. The body is a chisel that needs a strong will power to direct it. Thomas A. Edison worked for two years, sometimes for fourteen hours a day, trying to make the first phonograph record the sound, "Sh." He had a good mind and body, but more than that, he had a will strong enough to hold him on the job till he did it successfully. The man who can restrain his appetites, and push on through discouragements and failures, is a good craftsman.

A man never builds a happy life without another tool—his *heart*. By that we mean his disposition and sympathies. "His heart is in the right place," we say of a man and it means much. It means the pay envelope is not the biggest thing in the world to him. He has a core of friendliness and good will in him. It is the things that we put our hearts into, as we say, that give us pleasure. One man asked another once on a street car, "Who are you working for now?"



“Same people,” was the answer. “Wife and four children.” He had the right idea. And because of them his heart was in his work. A very different kind of man said not long ago, “My life is a failure. I’ve spent all my money for food to eat and clothes to wear. The things I eat don’t agree with me and the clothes don’t fit.” He had missed much by never learning to use the fine tool of a friendly heart.

## VI

### “Straight Traffic at the Next Corner”

**A**T the corner of Church and Chapel Streets in New Haven, the busiest corner in town, there are four signs which read like this: “Straight Traffic at the Next Corner.” The signs are attached to posts marked with a white ring about twenty-five yards from the corner on each street. Like a great many other people, the first time I read the sign I didn’t know exactly what it meant. The other day I saw a policeman go up to an automobile which had stopped on the corner and tell the driver to “Move on.” He said to the driver, “What’s the matter with you? Can’t you read that sign?”

“Sure, I can read,” said the driver, with a grin. “What does it mean?”

“It means,” said the traffic policeman, “that if you pass that white post, you have to keep on going till you cross the street. This is a crowded corner and the regulation is that if you start to cross the street you’ve

got to keep right on. You can't stop and you can't turn. Now, keep a-movin'." And he moved!

Ever since that day I have thought of a good many things every time I see the sign. There are many things which, if we once start on them, mean "Straight traffic at the next corner." If we go so far, we are compelled by the very force of habit to go all the way; and to go a great deal farther than we ever meant to go. There is a certain place in every habit, no matter what kind of a habit it is, that is just like the white post near the busy corner of New Haven. The laws of nature, just like the blue-coated policeman, enforce the rule that if we pass that point, we have to go clear on to the end, whether we want to or not. We can't stop and we can't turn.

The only safe way to travel, if we do not wish to go on to the end, is to see the sign and *stop* before we pass the post.

Take a very common and practical instance—the matter of liquor and drugs. I take it for one reason, that in the use of intoxicants this truth of habit stands out in such a clear, white light. I do not believe that any one on earth was ever such a fool as to start out with the intention of going the

whole distance with either drugs or liquor. They all mean to stop a long distance this side of the bread line and the "D. T's." But they find somewhere that the traffic regulations of their own system refuse to let them stop, when they have finally decided to.

A few years ago I was living in a suburban town about twelve miles west of St. Louis, Mo. One night I ran to catch a train to take me there and just managed to swing up on the back platform of the last car as it was pulling out. Feeling lucky that I had just caught it, I settled down for a nap till I reached my station. After about twenty minutes I looked out of the window to see where I was, and found the train was running right by the station at which I wished to get off. So I hurriedly found the conductor and told him I wanted to get off. He looked at me in surprise and said, "Why, what do you think you are on, anyhow? You didn't get the right train. The local was on the next track. This is the through express and doesn't stop until it gets to Jefferson City, one hundred and fifty miles from here." So I went on to Jefferson City and stayed all night.

A great many men have waked up to find themselves in something of the same fix I

was in that night. They have started in with some habit without thinking very much about it, supposing they could stop whenever they wanted to, and then have discovered that they were on a “through” train, a force that was carrying them farther than they ever meant to go.

Back in the old days when the cable cars ran on Broadway in New York, the corner of Fourteenth Street and Broadway used to be called “Dead Man’s Curve.” There was a sharp turn and in order to get around it at all the motorman had to take a firm clutch on the cable and hold on till the curve was rounded. So when once the car started there was nothing to do but go on, and there were a great many accidents at that corner. It was a corner that needed special warning and protection.

That is only another real picture of the same truth. Many a man has reached “Dead Man’s Curve” through the grip of some habit of which he cannot let go.

Of course, drink is not the only habit which means straight going to the end. Drink may be a large cause of the country’s misery but it is not the only cause, by a great deal. All habits of mind and action grow unconsciously until, as the Duke of Wellington

said, habit is not second nature but "ten times nature." The habit of miserliness, old-fashioned downright meanness, will spoil a life more surely than anything ever put up in bottles, though not so quickly, perhaps. It needs just as watchful an eye for the white post which shows the place where we can stop.

The only safe place to put the white post is right at the very beginning before we start.

## VII

### What's Wrong with the World?

**W**HAT'S wrong with the world? I think we would all agree there is something wrong with it. It rattles. It does not seem to be geared up just right now. The wheels do not lock together and there is friction, waste and suffering. We can hear the horrible rumble of a world out of order from Europe every day. As we look over from this side of the Atlantic, the countries on the other side look like a gigantic lunatic asylum broken loose, painting the earth with blood. But we do not have to stretch our eyes across the ocean to find something wrong. It would be a happy state of affairs if we did. There is too much here at home right under our eyes that tells us that there is something wrong with the world. Any one with half an eye sees every day an amount of poverty, suffering, unemployment and crime; luxury, waste, selfishness and stealing, that is appalling. Of course, in spite of it all, the world does go

ahead from year to year and make progress, just as an automobile will creep along somehow with a flat tire, sand in the gear box and hitting only one cylinder. But we cannot be satisfied in either case that that was the way it was meant to go.

Some people will tell us that *everything* is wrong with the world. They are "sour" on the whole thing. They can't see any good in life at all. In summer it is too hot; in winter, too cold. Nothing is right; everything is "going to the dogs." Fortunately there are not very many of such pessimists around loose. One of them is enough for every two or three thousand people. Such a pessimist gets very tiresome and doesn't help a bit; he only makes things worse. "We're here because we're here," and it doesn't get us anywhere to go around whining all the time about what a poor place the world is. It's a lot better game to make the best of what we find.

Other people tell us that what is wrong with the world is that *there are too many people in it*. They look around and see a great deal of competition and poverty and say, "There is not enough of anything to go around; not enough food; not enough wealth. Reduce the population," they say,



"and have fewer people to feed and everything will be all right." If that is the case and we have to reduce the population, it might be just as well to start in with the folks who tell us to do it. That would make a few less to feed anyhow, and they could easily be spared.

Nothing could be more foolish than to say there are too many people in the world. There are not enough. Not enough to occupy the land, and develop the resources. In 1914 the United States grew two and a half billion bushels of corn, one and a quarter billion bushels of oats, and 760 million bushels of wheat, to mention only three grains, and that with 290 millions of acres of public land still untouched! Too many people in the world? No, that is not the trouble! The world produces enough every year to take care of its family in handsome fashion.

The trouble lies not with the *number* of people in the world, but with the *kind* of people. It is not a surplus of quantity in people, but a deficit in quality, which makes the trouble. There are not enough people who have learned to coöperate; to respect the rights of others as surely as they claim their own; people who have learned to say "we" and "us," instead of only "I" and

"me." That is the chief thing wrong with the world, but that is enough to make most of the trouble.

Part of the trouble is that the world of men got a bad start. There was a time in the beginning of history when there was *not* enough food to go around. If a tribe of savage men were to survive, they had to fight for the good pasture or farm land. It was a case of the strongest tribe winning and getting all it could. It is that "grab" quality in the savage which has survived and is the principal cause of every war there has ever been. It is the principal cause of the friction, the fierce competition, the want, there is in the world.

It is a good thing to grow out of. There is not the same reason to-day for acting on the principle, "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." There is enough to go around now. With the new surplus of products, we need a new way of thinking and living to go with it. The old "every-one-grab-for-himself" method hasn't panned out very well. It has developed good traits—self-reliance, industry, energy and initiative; but the times demand along with those virtues a new feeling of social unity, a fairer distribution of privileges and a

fresh sense of common brotherhood. This great world war has made men realize that a narrow, selfish idea of national patriotism must give way some time to a world federation. Coöperation is the biggest word in the dictionary right now. "The nineteenth century made the world a neighborhood; it is the task of the twentieth century to make it a brotherhood." It looks as though the twentieth century, in the awful year of 1914, got away to a bad start, but it will make a better finish.

What is needed between countries is needed between men. To think less about "me," and more about "us"—that is what is needed between man and man, employer and employee, citizen and citizen.

It is a long job. It will not be done next year or even in the next generation. But it's coming.

"For a' that and a' that  
It's coming yet, for a' that  
That man to man the world o'er  
Shall brothers be, for a' that."

Whatever any one of us can do to promote this spirit of social justice by helping to secure fairer opportunities and protect the weak, we ought to do. But the first and

biggest thing any man can do towards tinkering up this old world is to give it one more person who has learned to coöperate, and who cares a little about the next fellow's share as well as his own.

You will forget a good deal of this. But here is the whole thing rolled up in a nutshell :—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them."

## VIII

### That "Kid"

**Y**OU think a good deal of "that kid" at home. Whether the youngster is a boy or girl, whether there is one or three or four, you wouldn't think much of the man who didn't believe that his "kid" is just about as good as the other fellow's—and then some. The man who isn't proud of his children has no right to have any.

One of the most encouraging things in the world to-day is that people everywhere are beginning to think more about children than ever before. Particularly they are thinking more of the rights of children and are coming to feel that a child has rights which the state and every one else is bound to respect. A hundred years ago it would have sounded strange to have talked about the rights of children. The law said a parent had a "right" to his child, but it did not know much about the rights of a child and it did not enforce them. When the change in industry from hand work to machine manufacture

came about in England, they let children under ten years of age work for twelve and fourteen hours a day with no protection and hardly any wages. It was a long fifty-year fight to get laws protecting them passed, and it was only when the people came to see that ruining the health of thousands of children was the surest way to ruin a nation, by wasting its finest wealth, that they were passed. We have had to go through the same hard fight for child labor laws in this country, and we are not through it yet.

The state, in these days, is recognizing that the child has some sacred rights which it is bound to respect, the right to be educated, the right to be protected from exploitation, the right to play. But beyond these rights there are others, and more important ones; rights that a child has on his "dad."

The first and by far the biggest thing your child has a "right" to is *the right to be well born*. Everything else depends on that. Your boy and mine has a right to come into the world well born, sound in body and limb and sound in mind. And if, through any fault of ours, he starts the race of life with any sort of a handicap, a weakened constitution, a disease of body or mind, we have done him a wrong that nothing on earth can ever

make right. A man would scorn to rob a baby's bank. It would be a mean thing no one would want to be guilty of. Yet how many men there have been who have robbed their baby's bank of health and vigor, plundered his whole chance in life, before he was born. They did not intend to do it. They would not have hurt the child after he was born for the world. But they robbed him of his right to a fair start in life by their habits before he was born. A few dimes or dollars in a child's iron bank on the shelf do not make much difference one way or another. What *does* count is the bank of health and strength that he starts out in life with. A man said to a friend once, standing beside his child, "I'd give my right hand if that boy had a clean bill of health." It was too late. The boy's health had been decided years before by his father's habits. Your child and mine has a right to a fair start in life—and the only way we can give it to him is by clean living.

That "kid" has a *right to a good example*. That does not just mean that it would be a fine thing for him to have a good example. It means he has a *right* to it. It is one of the most important things you can give him. No matter how many other things he may

have he will be poor without that. I may never be able to give my boy a college education. He may be lucky to even get through the grammar school. But all the education in the world will not compare for a minute with the equipment in life that I can give him by furnishing him a good example in his "dad." He is bound to follow me whether I want him to or not. I am either going to give him a shove down hill, or a strong pull in the direction of making a man of him. There is no more sobering question for any man to ask himself than this: "Are you giving your 'kid' a good example to steer by, or one that is going to send him on the rocks?"

A man in Buffalo left home one morning after a heavy snowfall to go to work. His feet sank into the snow on the sidewalk, making great big tracks. He had just reached the corner, where he was about to turn into the saloon, for what he called a "bracer," when he heard his five-year-old boy calling to him, "I'm coming after you, daddy; I've got my feet in your tracks." And, sure enough, he was coming along, putting his little feet in his father's big tracks. The man didn't stop in at the corner saloon that morning. He didn't want his boy to



follow his tracks there. It made him think, as never before, that whatever tracks he made, his youngster was sure to follow in them.

*Every child has a right to his "dad."* He has a right to know him—to have him for a "pal." Too many times we hand the children over to their mother and let it go at that. Many fathers wonder why they have not much influence or control over their children when they get older. The real reason is that they never took the time and trouble to become real friends with them when they were small. They were either too busy or too tired. A good many thousand boys and girls who have "gone wrong" would have "gone right" if they had had companions in their fathers. And aside from what it does for your boy or girl, the time you give to making friends with them will be one of the best investments of time for yourself you ever made.

## IX

### The Story of a Tramp

**O**UT in Indiana a few months ago there was erected a statue of a man named John Chapman. He lived in the early part of the last century when the middle Western states, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois were being settled. If you were to consider only the outward features of his life, he would appear a good deal like a tramp, a shifting, unattached kind of person. He had no regular home ; he had no regular trade. He hardly ever made a dollar in his life. For thirty or forty years he journeyed continually over the whole of those four states, rarely ever stopping in a place longer than over night, all the time risking his life from exposure and the Indians. A great many people, as they stayed close to their comfortable, settled farms, considered him a bit " off " ; harmless, of course, but just a little bit crazy. He was known to almost every settler in the whole Ohio valley as " Johnny Appleseed." For wherever he went, winter or summer, he always carried a large sack of apple seeds,

which he either set out in young orchards himself, or left with settlers to be planted. The one great passion of his life was to have the whole of that wild new country dotted with apple orchards, so that the next generation would be able to enjoy the fruit of his labors. And to-day it is well within the bounds of fact to say that most of the millions of apple trees bearing fruit in those four or five states are descended from the trees planted by "Johnny Appleseed" a century ago.

"Johnny Appleseed" did not need a statue of marble to do him honor. The monument of his heroic and unselfish life is found in the uncounted millions of apple blossoms which send their fragrance into the air every spring, and in the grateful thanks of a whole generation of settlers who held him in loving remembrance. He was a soldier of the common good,—a hero as truly as any man who ever led an infantry charge. The apple blossoms that gladdened the hearts and the fruits that brought comfort and pleasure to the rude firesides of the earliest settlers of the Middle West were the living memorials of an apostle of beauty and social service who is now almost forgotten. The story of this "tramp" is well worth remembering.

John Chapman was not crazy; no more than any man who gives his strength to unselfish service and is thought to be crazy by those who never take their eyes off the main chance of getting something for themselves. Some years after the close of the Revolutionary War, he was living in the little settlement of Pittsburgh, then a town of fifteen hundred people, where the immigrants fitted out their wagons for the wilderness of Ohio, full of uncut forests and wild Indians. He had a nursery for fruit trees and tried to sell the seeds and young trees to the settlers to take along with them and plant, so that their children would have orchards to enjoy. But the business was poor. The men all said they had no time to bother with setting out trees which would not bear for a dozen years. There was too much land for them to clear right away. They could not look so far ahead. Many a settler's wife looked longingly at the blossoms in his orchard at Pittsburgh, with homesick memories of her old orchard at her former New England home.

As John Chapman watched this stream of immigration flow by, his heart was saddened. For he had had a wonderful vision of a wilderness blossoming, and now it appeared that whole generations must miss the privilege

because no one would undertake the work of planting fruit trees in the wilderness. That vision was the call to John Chapman to give his own life to the doing of this work which no one else would do. It meant giving up his whole life. It meant selling out his farm and nursery, giving up all hope of ever having a home of his own, or ever making any money for himself. It meant years of weary travelling through wild and rough country—living like a penniless tramp. It meant the discouragement of planting a hundred seeds for every one that would live and grow into a tree.

But the result, as he saw it in his imagination—thousands of homes brightened and blessed by his fruit trees, was worth all the cost. For thirty years he went about on journeys of thousands of miles, on foot and on horse, setting out orchards; coming back in the winter time to get his seeds and starting out again in the spring. People came to look for him every year and though he never knew a home of his own, he was welcomed in every settler's house as a friend; though he never sold a seed or a tree and never made any money, all that the backwoodsman's house had was his without the asking. He lived to see four whole states covered

with rich orchards, and in the joy of the settlers he found a reward that no man could ever take away from him. He kept up his service to the very end and dropped dead by the roadside one day in Northern Indiana, a bag of seeds over his shoulder, not a cent in his pocket, but a smile on his face. He had been paid for his life of work in better coin than gold.

"Johnny Appleseed" is a good man to think of once in a while. The details of his wandering, roving life are things that belong to another age. They could never be reproduced to-day and there is no need that they should. But the spirit of the man, the great big heart that found its best pay in the comfort and joy he gave to other people, is a thing which can always be reproduced and for which there is always a crying need. It is something that will mix in well with any work a man is doing. More than that, unless there is something of that unselfish spirit mixed in with it, even the best paid work is a poor job. It was just the spirit in which Lincoln did all his work and which gave him his largest returns. He put it into a remark, made the last year of his life, to his boyhood friend, John R. Speed. One night near midnight, a few months before Lincoln's

death, Mr. Speed found him in his office exhausted, after having listened to the appeals of a long line of visitors for hours. Speed protested that Lincoln was wearing himself out needlessly. "You ought not to let these people take your time this way," he said. Lincoln answered that helping people was all the fun he ever had. "Speed," he said, "when I die I want it said of me that I plucked a thistle and planted a flower wherever I thought a flower would grow."

## X

### The Rudder

A GREAT ocean liner, not long ago, had travelled almost all the way across the Atlantic; when it lost its rudder. It is a hard thing for a ship to make port without a rudder. The captain was naturally pretty much worried. One of the women passengers was talking to him and wanted to cheer him up a bit and said, "Never mind, captain, it won't make any difference. The rudder was away down out of sight where no one ever saw it anyhow." We laugh at it, for it seems to us men a good deal like a woman's reasoning, that the only use of a rudder was to be seen, and that because it was out of sight it didn't make any difference whether the rudder was there or not.

Yet it is not such an uncommon kind of reasoning, childish as it may seem. Grown men reason that way every day—or act that way without reasoning, which amounts to the same thing. Every day people act as though they believed that as long as a thing



was out of sight, it doesn't make any difference. All of us are tempted to think so at times.

Here is a man with some habit like the drug habit or something worse. No one ever sees him at it and for a long time it is as far out of sight as the rudder. Because no one suspects, he imagines that he is "getting away with it" and begins to pat himself on the back. But whether any one else knows it or not, the man's stomach knows it, his nerves know it, his muscles and brain cells know it. Sooner or later, when the man goes "stale," as he is bound to do, his friends know there is something wrong, though they may not be able to tell just what it is. His rudder is gone—the unseen forces of mind and will which direct a man.

A man is really steered and guided by things which no one ever sees,—his thoughts, desires and beliefs, buried deep down in his mind out of sight, but whose effects show up in plain sight every minute. A large iceberg will float swiftly along in one direction in an open and quiet sea, and you wonder what is making it move in that direction, till you learn that there are currents down underneath the surface of the water and the iceberg is moved and guided by the strong

swift currents beneath. So every man is guided and controlled by the currents of thought which he allows to run through his mind unhindered.

The Bible, as usual, puts the thing in the strongest way it has ever been put: As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. A man's clothes or his manners may fool ninety-nine per cent. of the people, but a man actually *is* what he thinks about, nothing else. He may have a clean collar, a clean shave and a Turkish bath and look clean as a whistle, and all the time his mind may be like a sewer and his conversation like the vile-smelling gas which escapes from it. That is just about what Jesus said of the Pharisees of His time, not a bit stronger. He said, "You are outwardly clean, but inside are like whitewashed tombs, full of dead men's bones." He told them that they cleaned the outside of the platter and cup, but left the inside of the cup dirty. The thing which defiled a man, He told them, was not the honest dirt that got on their hands but the dirt that got into their minds and hearts—the lust, the hatred and envy.

It is well worth thinking about,—the question of whether the rudder is true to the keel, whether the place where we live in our minds

is clean and fit to live in. For the desires and longings we harbor absolutely determine the kind of people we are. A woman wrote a wild story once called "Frankenstein." It is about a young medical student who constructed a monster out of parts of bodies of men found in cemeteries and dissecting rooms. This monster had life and intelligence and great physical strength but no soul. The creature obeyed him at first, doing whatever the student wanted, but gradually grew more and more uncontrollable, till at last he was the master and the student who created him was the slave. It was only written as a wild romance but is a true picture of what happens every day. The thoughts we have become our master whether we intend them to be or not. A man who indulges unclean imaginations and desires is creating within himself a force which will compel him to go on doing it as surely as the rudder swings a ship to the right or left.

*The things a man believes in* are his powerful rudder, too. A man who has no belief in something outside of himself, no belief in God, no attachment to an ideal, of honor, or truth, is like a derelict tramp ship, spun about by whatever wind happens to be blowing. We frequently hear it said, "It isn't

what a man believes that counts, but what he does." It is only true this far, that a man's real belief always shows in what he does and how he lives. A belief that is not backed up by life is not worth a row of pins, no matter how often a man goes to church or how piously he talks. But a life worth while, which is not only good, but *good for something*, is shaped by a man's beliefs. When a man believes in God, a God who looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart, who is working in the world and controls it in love, he has brought into his life the strongest force on earth and the one that counts most for happiness.

There is on the Sub-Treasury building in New York City a fine piece of statuary, of George Washington at Valley Forge, kneeling down in prayer in the woods in winter. That figure explains a great deal of the strength of Washington's life. It is no accident that the two greatest Americans whom we all look up to and most admire, Washington and Lincoln, were men of prayer and men of faith in God. Their strong belief in God was the rudder which guided the ship.

## XI

### The Proudest Day of Your Life

A FEW years ago, a young Swedish American about forty years old, John A. Johnson, was governor of Minnesota. He was the first Democrat ever elected governor of the state. People all over the country began to talk of him for President, and he was invited to speak at a banquet in Washington, at which the leading men in the country were present. He went on East and made his speech and it made a big impression on that audience. When he got back to Minnesota, some one said to him, "Governor, I'll bet that was the proudest day of your life, speaking before an audience like that—Supreme Court Judges, Senators and Congressmen!"

The Governor thought a minute and said, "No, it wasn't."

"Well, what was the proudest day of your life?" he was asked.

"The proudest day of my life," Governor Johnson replied, "was when I was a boy,

twelve years old, and got my first pay envelope at the end of the week, with three dollars in it, and took it home and gave it to my mother and said, 'Here, mother, you needn't take in washing any more.' "

Nothing in his life ever gave better proof that Governor Johnson was a real man. His mother had been left a widow when she had been in this country only a short time, with a large family to bring up. John, being the oldest boy, had to go to work when he was twelve years old, and was glad to help and had a right to be proud of being able to help. He was never ashamed of the fact that his mother took in washing for a good many years, as some men might have been, or ashamed of her or the hard conditions under which he grew up. When he was running for governor some people began to make sneering remarks about the "shame" of having a rough lumberman, "who wouldn't know how to wear a dress suit if he had one," in the governor's chair. But the American people have a great deal of common sense, and instead of that losing votes for Johnson, it gained them by the thousand. He died when he was a little over forty years old, when it looked as though he were going higher in political life; but even had

he been elected President, it would not have been as proud a day as when he took that first pay envelope home to his mother.

The story brings up an interesting question—"What would most men tell you about if you asked them what was the proudest day of their lives?" Would it be something as well worth being proud of as it was with Governor Johnson, or something on the outside that after all was kind of cheap and did not have a great deal to do with the kind of men they were on the inside? It is a proud day for a little girl when she has on a new dress; she wants every one to see it and walks down the street with her head away up in the air. A little bit of it is all right in a little girl. We all want our children to look nice. But are there not a great many men who are proud of things just as foolish to be proud of as a new dress? Some men are proud of their money, whether they have much or only a little; provided it is a little bit more than some other fellow has, and they can swell around and show it off before him. Some men have their proudest day when they get a new job, even though they may get it through some kind of a pull, and it shows nothing of their own ability. Other men are proudest of the amount of

knowledge they have, even when that is due to opportunities that other men never had.

But what are all these things but outside trimmings, that do not tell much of what a man actually is?

“The rank is but the guinea stamp  
The man’s the thing, for a’ that.”

The thing a man has a right to be proud of is what he has made out of *himself*. It ought to be plainly understood just how we are using that word “proud.” There is a kind of pride which is composed mostly of vanity, and which is always the mark of a small man, never of a great man. The true mark of a real man is always the humility which George Washington showed when he took command of the American Army. “There are many men,” he said, “far more fit to command the army than I am.” It was not true, but he thought it was and his humility was part of his greatness.

On the other hand, there is a kind of pride which is made up of honest self-respect and confidence, and every man needs some of it in his make up or he will never amount to much. There are some things a man ought **to take an honest satisfaction and self-respect**



in. It is a proud day for any one when he has *learned to do competent work*. That means more than money or that he has landed a good place. It means a man has become a skilled, efficient producer. He can look the world in the face, for he has mastered a trade, or a line of work and is not a "dead beat," "sponging" a living out of his fellows, but gives a fair and honest return for all he gets. A man who has gone through the discipline which makes him a good carpenter, mechanic, wheelwright, has more to be proud of than the contractor who has an "easy" thing, grafting on the city, or the man who lives on the work of some one else.

It is a good day to mark with a red letter when a man turns down an opportunity for gain or pleasure that comes his way, but which would take away some of his self-respect or bring shame to another. It may be a chance to make a piece of "easy money," the making of which is a little bit shady. It may be some dissipation that would rob him of the sense of being clean, decent, square. Men are overcoming temptations like that every day, honestly keeping faith with their best purposes; those are the days to which a man can look back with lasting satisfaction. The most satisfying job a man

ever does is when he keeps his own life true to the plumb line of cleanness.

Any ordinary day when a man makes his home a happy place for his family and himself to live in is a day to be proud of always. When the children in a man's family are glad to see him coming home, when they do not have to look twice to see if he is walking straight; when his wife knows that he isn't bringing home a large, loud "grouch" to give it an airing, and act as a kill-joy over the supper table; where a man will take time to live with his family—take them out on Sunday—and make home a place of peace and happiness and good ideals;—well, that's as near heaven as we need to get down here. Whoever does that—and we can all do it if we will—whether he ever rolls up much of a bank account or not, or gets his name into anything except the city directory, has done a piece of work to be proud of.

## XII

### “Wooden Money”

**T**WO men parted on a street car the other night and one said to the other, “Well, so long. Don’t take any wooden money.”

It is a piece of old advice we frequently hear and it has a perfectly clear meaning. It is a good-natured warning to take care of ourselves and keep our eyes open, count our change, and not let any one “put anything over” on us.

It is not bad advice to follow, even literally. There are a good many lead nickels and plugged quarters going the rounds and it is just as well not to go to sleep while we are looking over our change. It has a larger meaning in not allowing ourselves to be cheated in any way. The “gold brick” man is not so much in evidence as he was a generation ago. The public has become much wiser and the promoters of all sorts of “fake” schemes have a much harder time roping in their victims than they once did.

It is a good sign of progress, although we cannot read the paper without feeling that there is lots of room for improvement. Thousands of people are still taking "wooden money" for their hard-earned cash in the shape of all sorts of "get-rich-quick" schemes, tips on the market, tips on the races, "bucket shops," and other traps for blind sheep. It is hard to believe that thousands of supposedly intelligent people handed over their money a few years ago in New York, without any security, to a man who offered to pay them ten per cent. a week, or 520 per cent. a year on their investment. But it is true. Of course, the thing "blew up" in a few months, sweeping away the savings of years from people who had gotten the itch of the "easy money" fever. The "get-rich-quick" game is one that means a man's finish, morally as well as financially, in nine cases out of ten. Your money is a good deal like a race-horse. When you are getting four or five per cent. on it, you are driving it safe and steady. Eight or ten is as fast as it can stand. If you whip it up and try to make it earn twenty per cent. or more for you, it is going to lie down and "go flat" and you lose it all. Don't take any "wooden money" in the shape of wild

get-rich-quick shares. If you wish to get a real return on it, and keep a clear conscience in the bargain, write “ Safety Always ” across your greenbacks.

“ Wooden Money ” is a good thing to look out for in the larger result that a man gets out of his labor. The pay envelope has value only in the thing its contents will buy. A man’s actual pay is never the number of dollars he makes, but the satisfactions and benefits he derives from what he buys with the pay. That is the final and net pay a man receives ; and for that reason, one man drawing a smaller number of dollars than another may get more in actual benefits and enjoyments than the other, and hence, receive more *real* pay. How much pay a man gets depends on what he buys with his wages. One man purchases *real goods* ; another takes in return a good deal of “ wooden money ”—things which never bring him real, lasting satisfaction.

There is one kind of “ wooden money ” of this character, that is so often taken that it is worth while examining it. It is very popular and men pay a high price for it, but it never brings anything at all in proportion to its cost. It is the reputation of being “ *a jolly good fellow.* ” The very name has a

fine ring to it; it suggests the rollicking good time, the high spirits, and the

“fair weather,  
When good fellows get together,  
With a stein on the table,  
And a good song ringing clear.”

It makes a fellow feel good to have “the bunch” begin to sing, when he comes around:

“For he’s a jolly good fellow,  
Which nobody can deny.”

It costs good money and lots of it to keep up a reputation like that. It means standing treat a great many times. It means giving a great deal of time. But many men are not discouraged at the price. They look around the market and figure that that kind of a reputation is just the thing they want to buy.

A large part of the attractiveness comes from a fine thing, too,—the love of fellowship. Some one asked Robert Louis Stevenson once what was the finest thing in life. “Friends,” was his answer, and he did not wait long to decide, either. Friendship is one of the finest things in life, and to be known as a friendly, cheerful, obliging, companionable sort of man is a thing well worth

achieving. There is not much that is better. But the friendliness that springs from a man's heart is a very different thing from the “ jolly good fellowship ” that is located mainly in the stomach. Let a man put that last statement to the test. Let a run of hard luck strike him and then let him try to convert into real help the “ good fellowship ” that centered around a table when he had ready money and a disposition to treat just as ready, and he will find out how little of an asset it is. The reputation is “ wooden money.” It cannot be exchanged for anything of real value.

It will not pass for value in another important place, either. It may be perfectly true that he is a “ jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny.” Nobody is interested in denying it. His employer doesn't deny it. All he does is to shove some one else up into the vacant place when the chance of promotion comes, and leave him where he was, to go on being “ a jolly good fellow.” The employer needs a man who has mastered a specialty a little more valuable to him than the ability to slap another fellow on the back and genially inquire, “ What will you have to drink ? ”

Here are the words of a man who had travelled to the end of “ Good Fellows' Lane.”

They were written by Damon Runyan, a newspaper reporter, in a poem called, "The Song of the Rails" :

" I'm roostin' here like a Shantycleer on a rod  
the size of a match,  
With an open view on either side, and a box-car  
floor for a thatch ;  
An' I hopes the 'shack ' won't find me, for me  
face is all he could punch  
As I'm beatin' me old friend, James J. Hill, an'  
eatin' his ballast for lunch !  
Oh, the ground slips by like a river,  
An' me nerves are all a-quiver —  
For I've been out on a sort of a bat an' the rail  
joints sing to me :

" ' John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !  
He's brought you where you are.  
You pay his rates and ride the freights  
But never a parlor car.  
John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !  
A hundred thousand men  
May play his game, but end the same,  
And never see home again ! ' "



### XIII

#### One Skate

A YOUNG fellow was coming down the street the other day having the time of his life on one roller skate. You have probably all seen children doing the same thing and it is surprising how fast a young chap can go, considering that he has to push about half the time with the foot that has no skate on.

I think that fellow having a good time with one roller skate was an optimist. He represents an attitude to life good to carry around with one. I do not know why he had only one skate ; perhaps the other one was broken or lost or some one else had it. But at any rate he wasn't going to let the fact that he had only one skate spoil a good time for him. If he had only *one* skate, why, he would get all the fun there was to be had out of that one. A good many people would have sat down in the dumps, and said, "If I only had two skates I'd have a great time ! But what's the use of trying to go on one skate ? It's

mighty tough not to have two." That is a very common way of thinking about things; a very common way of spoiling the enjoyment of what a person *has*, by complaining about the things which he has *not*. This little chap was much wiser. He reasoned: "Two skates may be better than one, but one is a whole lot better than none at all, so, Here Goes! for the best time any one ever got out of one skate."

We are all tempted to think that if we only had this or that which some one else has, there might be a chance for us really to enjoy ourselves. But as things are, with only what we have, and a fair sized piece of hard luck in the bargain, there is not very much use of our trying to work up any enthusiasm. So a great many folks, instead of catching the spirit of the young philosopher and his one skate, begin to pity themselves and miss the opportunity of getting the best out of the situation they are in. It is stupid business, to say the least.

The finest football game I ever saw and the one I shall never forget was not one between Yale and Harvard with 40,000 people in the stands, although I have seen several of those games. The finest game I ever saw was a game played by the boys of two blind asylums

several years ago. It was the best because it was played in the spirit of pure grit. Both teams were composed entirely of blind boys. You would think football would be the last thing on earth blind boys would ever tackle. There would be a good excuse for them to stay out of it. And we would have a great deal of sympathy for them if they sat by and wished that they could see so that they might have the fun of playing football. But these fellows weren't made out of that kind of stuff. They said, "We can't play football just like every one else plays but we can play some way and we'll get all the sport there is in the game for us." You can be sure they did. They played a good hard game, judging their movements entirely by the sense of hearing and touch, made some fine tackles and had as much sport out of the game as any two teams that ever lined up against each other. That is the spirit that not only wins, but makes it possible for any man to make the best out of any situation he is in.

One principal reason we do not enjoy life more is that we spend so much time looking over the fence at the other fellow and thinking how well off we would be if we were only in his shoes. Part of the time he is looking over his fence and thinking the same thing

about us. The other afternoon I saw two women approaching each other on the sidewalk. You all know how two women look at each other from the feather on their hat down to the shoes. One woman was "sizing up" the other's new coat. She looked at her as she was approaching and then turned around to look at her after she had passed. The result was that while her head was turned she walked right into a telegraph pole. It is just that way that a good many folks come to grief, by twisting their necks around to see the things of some one else, instead of going ahead as happily and contentedly as possible on their own way.

This "one skate" way of acting is a good thing for two reasons. One of them is that it gets the very best results out of the things a man has to make happiness out of. Whether a man enjoys life or not depends much more on the spirit he has than the possessions he has, just as a man's comfort depends more on the health of his body than on the price he paid for his clothes. A brave, optimistic making the most of things is the health of a man's mind, the best possession he can have.

The other reason is that any other way of acting stamps a man as a "quitter." It

shows up a little trace of a "yellow streak" inside. To keep hugging our own hard luck story or handing it out to our friends, to refuse to enjoy what we have because of what we have not, is to pin a little white feather on ourselves, a thing no real man wants to do.

" Did you tackle that trouble that came your way  
With a resolute heart and cheerful?  
Or hide your face from the light of day,  
With a craven soul and fearful?  
Oh, a trouble's a ton, or a trouble's an ounce  
Or a trouble is what you make it.  
It isn't the fact that you're hurt that counts,  
But only, how did you take it? "

## XIV

### No Compensation for "Fooling"

**T**HE Workman's Compensation Commission of Connecticut made a decision not long ago, in connection with a case before it, which had an unusual degree of interest. A man had had his hand injured in a shop where he was working and in accordance with the law had applied for an award in compensation for it. While the present compensation laws may not be all that are desired in many states, they are a huge improvement over former conditions and are a just recognition of the principle that a workman has a fair right to compensation for accidents that happen to him in the course of his work.

The Commission made an investigation of this accident and found that the man was not hurt while doing his assigned work, but while throwing things around the shop and "fooling" with some of the other workmen. When drawing his hand back to throw something at another man, it was caught in the

machinery and injured. On this evidence the Commission decided that he was not entitled to an award. While a man has a right to compensation for all injuries received while engaged at his work, he has "*no right to compensation for fooling.*"

This decision is a far-reaching one and will doubtless be applied to many cases which shall come up in the future. It is a fair one. Very few machines can be made absolutely "fool proof," and it is hardly fair to compel one man to pay for the results of another's deliberate "fooling."

It is a clear, definite principle which applies to the whole of a man's life, as well as to the matter of receiving damages for accidents. It might almost be called an unchangeable law. In every department of life and work there is sure reward for definite, legitimate work and endeavor. But there is nowhere in nature any "compensation for fooling."

It is so in every man's *occupation*. A man may put a good many hours and years, for that matter, into the careful and energetic doing of his work and fitting himself for work, and not seem to have a great deal to show for it. He may think there is little use. But in the vast majority of cases the hours

of persistent work bring a sure compensation in increased ability and increased opportunity. A man gets the compensation of making a sure place for himself. But there is no compensation for "fooling" in the industrial world. The aimless, idle, don't-care, let-it-slide hours, when they are gone, are gone forever and leave nothing added to a man's power.

It is a law of a man's *money* just as truly. There is sure compensation for the steady foresight and thrift that leads to wise saving and investment, however small it may be. You can bank on the certain compensation of life and accident insurance, the savings bank, the reliable building and loan association, but there is no reward for the thoughtless scattering at the dictation of the whim of the day. We whistle in vain for any return from money which has slipped through easy fingers in that way.

It is the stern law of a man's *health*, the resources he has in the well-being of his body. There is large compensation, as sure as the sunrise to-morrow, for every hour of right living which has gone into the building of strong muscles, sound organs and steady nerves. But there is none for "fooling" with the body, disregarding its laws, letting it



rust and wear away through rough handling. There are right at this moment men in the hospitals of this city whose only chance of life lies in the reserve strength which years of good physical care of themselves have built up. "What are his chances, doctor?" his friends ask anxiously about a man. Happy the man of whom the doctor can say, "Well, he has a good constitution that will probably pull him through. Everything in him is sound, and that gives him a good chance." But what chance has a man with a bloated liver, chunks of fat around his heart and a poisoned and overloaded stomach, against typhoid or pneumonia? Hardly a chance in a hundred! The man realizes then, if he never did before, that there is no compensation for fooling.

There is one other application of this about which it is only necessary to say a single word. It is something that nearly every man knows is true. It is this: This law applies with a terrible truth to a man's treatment of women. On the one side—in the building of a true home—there is the largest compensation for all of a man's work that he ever finds here on earth. It is because men *know* that, that the sentiment of the song writer, "There is no place like home," has gone

around the world and will live forever.  
Bobbie Burns had it right when he wrote,

“ To make a happy fireside clime  
For weans and wife,  
That's the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.”

That is one end of the scale. It is down at the other end—the gutter end—that there is no compensation. Unless you call as compensation a man's reward in disease, in shame, in the sense of rottenness that he has to face in himself, and the realization that he has pushed some woman down a little bit farther into the most miserable hell on earth. That is the compensation for trifling with and making coarse and brutal what ought to be the most sacred relationship of life. Oh, yes, there are some other kinds of compensation which ought not to be forgotten. You will find them in the blind asylum, the home for imbecile children, the insane asylum,—helpless children to whom life has been made a curse by the sins of the fathers.

## XV

### “Fielder’s Choice”

**W**E all know the play in a baseball game where a fielder may try to catch a particular ball or not, just as he chooses. The man at the bat raps a fast, sizzling liner just between short and third, in a place which is not squarely in the short-stop’s territory. He has a choice whether he wants to accept the chance or not. If he makes a brilliant try for it and gets it, so much the better for the team and his fielding average. But if he does not go after it, it is not chalked up against him as an error. Frequently, even if he gets his hands on it and then misses it, it still does not count as an error against him because it did not come right into his territory and so he had a choice about going after it.

While with such a ball it is no technical error not to try for it, the most valuable short-stop for a team to have is not a man who never misses anything but one who tries for every ball that he possibly can, who “covers” a lot of territory and who never refuses a

"long" chance. It was the habit of making the "extra try" which made Hans Wagner a great short-stop as well as a great hitter.

This kind of a fielder's choice, the thing which we can either take or let alone, just as we choose, comes to all of us in many places besides baseball. And it is the man who goes out of his way for the extra "try" who makes good in the game of life in the biggest way.

There are, of course, many things which come to us about which we have no choice at all. We have to do them whether we want to or not. We have to work eight or ten hours a day. There are parts of the day's work we can't skip. They are shoved right at us. We have to obey most of the laws of the city we live in or suffer for it.

But beyond these things that are distinctly "ours" in the sense that we make a big error that every one can see if we do not do them, there are many things we can do or not at our free choice. It is that way with many points about the work a man is doing. One man does the things he can't get out of doing for so many hours a day and lets it go at that. Another man takes a "fielder's choice" and goes out of his way to accept a chance to learn a little more about his

job, or how to do the job of the man next higher up. Perhaps he does it right in the shop or in some good night school or studies at home on some technical course. You see, he does not have to do it. He will not lose his job if he doesn’t take it, any more than the short-stop will lose his as long as he gets the balls that are knocked right to him. But the man who goes out of his way for the “extras,” of fitting himself for something better, is the man who gets something better, whether in baseball or anything else. There is undoubtedly a good deal of “pull” and favoritism in the business world, but for all that, it is the man who takes the extra chance who arrives somewhere.

The choice comes to us in other important ways. Along with our work, in the shop and wherever we go, we get a “fielder’s choice” about helping the other fellow. We don’t have to do it. No one can compel us to, and as long as we carry ourselves honestly and decently no one can chalk up a black mark against us on account of not doing it. But to go a little out of our way—to make an “extra” out of helping the other man, which may not be strictly our business—is the thing which makes as much finer a game out of living as it does out of baseball. In our re-

lations with others there are some things we have to do if we want to keep the respect of people. We have to be honest, because none of us wants to be known as tricky or crooked. We have to be polite, for none of us wants to be known as "an old grouch." But if in addition to these things we go a little farther and take a "fielder's choice" in helping a new or less experienced man with his work, taking time enough to be friendly beyond a mere "Hello" or "Good-night," giving a "lift" where we could easily sidestep it—those are the things that make all the difference in the world to the other fellow, and to us. For after we've tried it some we find that the best half of the fun in life comes from the extras we do for folks.

A few years ago a young immigrant from Denmark, who had had a lot of hard knocks the first years he was in this country, finally landed a good job as a police reporter on the New York *Tribune*. Going around on the East Side every day, he came to see that much of the trouble the police had was because the boys had no place to play except the street. Now it wasn't particularly his business to start a movement which resulted in hundreds of playgrounds for New York City. He might have said he had all he

could do to hold down his own job without loading up with the troubles of half the kids in New York. He could easily have said, “It’s none of my business.” For it really wasn’t. But he made it his business and New York is a better place to live in for thousands of people because he did. Jacob A. Riis got more pleasure out of that extra job he did for other people’s children than out of all the money he ever made.

We get the Fielder’s Choice at home. The law and common self-respect compels us to provide for our families. But no one can compel us to do the extra bit—the unlooked-for kindness—the extra effort to be cheerful—the time we give to the children to really get to know them. These are extras, that take a good deal of time and patience. But they pay. In the long run, they count a whole lot more in the game of making a happy home than the mere fact of having enough meat and potatoes to go around and a place to sleep.

## XVI

### Wild Animals I Have Met

**O**NCE a man wrote a very interesting book called "Wild Animals I Have Met." He knew the woods like an open book, and had some good tales to tell about the various grizzly bears and caribou and wildcats he had had the pleasure of meeting in the middle of the woods, sometimes in the middle of the night.

I suppose most of the men who like to shoulder a gun when they get a chance and trail off to the woods could tell us some tall tales about the wild animals they have met.

I am not an expert with a gun but I can tell you a few things about some queer kinds of wild animals that I meet nearly every day. They haven't got horns or claws. They wear trousers and brush their hair—when they have any—just like regular people. We do not need to go to the woods to find their tracks for we meet them everywhere, in the street, and shop and store and home. But whenever I meet any of them I have the distinct



feeling that they are some sort of an animal in disguise.

One "wild animal" I frequently meet is *the Grouch*. This animal does not confine itself to any particular place; you are liable to find it most anywhere. It usually likes to be alone, like a hermit crab. It makes a low, rumbling sort of noise, half-way between a snarl and a growl. Some things make the Grouch especially angry, like waving a red flag in front of a bull. If you say to the Grouch, "Say, old man, give us a lift with this, will you?" it usually emits a noise which sounds like this, "Aw, what do you take me for?" The Grouch never likes to lend anything. It never likes to see any one have a good time, and never helps make a good time. Though the Grouch is usually making a noise, there are some sounds which it is unable to make. He cannot make a hearty laugh. He cannot make a noise which sounds like a cheery, "Good-morning!" The Grouch is quite a timid animal. When some one gets in trouble and he is asked to "chip in with the bunch and help him out," he moves rapidly backwards, like a frightened crab. The Grouch has a very tender skin. He easily gets "sore," and when he is "sore," he is very disagreeable.

Every one gives the Grouch a wide berth, but he is really to be pitied, for he does himself more harm than he does to other people.

Another "wild" animal, not so dangerous as he is amusing, is *the Snob*. This animal goes around on stilts, like a giraffe, looking down on other people. He holds his head away up in the air. In his own opinion of himself he is not in the ranks of common men. Yet the strangest thing about this high-stepping kind of person is that when he meets some one higher, richer or stronger than himself, he bows down real low and makes a flattering fuss. He never enters into hearty and self-respecting coöperation with what he calls ordinary people. He can't, because he is a Snob. The queerest thing about this animal is that while he has a very much enlarged head and a stiff neck, there is hardly any place for a heart. It is so small you can hardly see it.

*The Knocker* is a common wild animal you have all met. He is known by the loud noise which he makes all the time, which sounds like the strokes of a hammer on an anvil. I never knew of a place which did not have at least one confirmed Knocker. One is enough to go around. The Knocker seems to be afraid of dying from shame if he

should ever be caught saying something good about a person. He knocks the Boss, he knocks the neighbors, he knocks the folks he works with. If you mention a good thing about a man, he is always ready with his "Yes, but ——" and then he starts in with a long string of defects to offset the good qualities. This animal has very keen eyes when he is looking for defects, but for good qualities he is stone blind. In nine cases out of ten he is envious or jealous, and when one has a feeling of inferiority, it is much easier to "run down" other people than to lift one's self up. Many men do it who do not mean to do the harm they cause, but it is a habit they easily get into, and it not only does harm to other people but it robs a man himself of the pleasure he might get out of the good things in other men. An astronomer had been looking through his telescope at the sun for several hours one day, when some one said to him, "What a fine day we have had." "I really hadn't noticed it," he answered; "I've been looking for the spots in the sun." A man misses all the good things when he is on the outlook for spots.

Another common animal is *the Sponge*. Many think of a sponge as a kind of vegeta-

ble, but it is really an animal. The zoölogy book calls it a "low grade" animal and that is a good description. When a man has the characteristics of a sponge he is a "low grade animal," too. One kind of a sponge is the man who makes it his ambition to see how much liquor he can "soak up." Some men can hold a great deal, just as some large sponges will hold several gallons. But when a man enters into competition with a large sponge, he steps down from his place as a man and enters the class of low grade animals.

Not all "sponges" are that kind, though. A sponge clings to something else and grows on it. It does not furnish its own support. It is a natural "grafter." So is the man who lives on other people's money, whether it is handed down to him by inheritance or whether he merely takes the advantages some one else provides. He is a low grade animal, compared with the man who is willing to pay his way with real work.

It is poor business being an animal like any of these when it is possible to be a *man*.

## XVII

### “What’s the Idea?”

**F**ASHIONS in slang change just about as often as fashions in clothes. We pick up an expression that is new and everybody uses it for a few months and then we drop it and take up something else. A couple of years ago, no matter what you told some people, they would answer you, “I should worry.” I am glad that is dead. We all got pretty tired of it. A few years farther back it was “Twenty-three!” Now it has been “Safety First!” for a long time. Of course that isn’t slang but it has been just as often repeated. Now we hear that question asked by some one nearly every time we turn around, “What’s the Idea?”

We usually ask the question when we are making fun of some one; a person doing a thing that seems to have no sensible purpose or idea behind it. But it is a good question to think of seriously for a few minutes.

“What’s the Idea?” The question implies that everything ought to have an idea behind

it. It ought to mean something. Everything ought to represent some rational purpose. When we go into a shop and see a steel drill we do not think of it as a queer shaped piece of metal. It has an idea behind it; it was made to do something. And if I am going to make good on a job in that shop I have to know the idea that is behind that piece of machinery—what it can do and how to handle it. A man is not worth much in a shop until he learns the idea behind the whole thing; otherwise he is liable to hitch up the belts on the wrong axles and somebody is going to get hurt.

It is just as important for us to learn the idea behind the great big "Shop" in which we all work all the time—the world itself. For the world is a great big works, bigger than any man can possibly conceive of. It produces uncountable billions of tons of raw and finished products every year. In addition there are manufactured every year lots of products which we cannot weigh on the scales or put a price tag on—happiness and beauty, joy and pain, love and friendship. These things all come from the world's mill. What is the purpose of the whole thing? Don't you think it is as much worth while to try to learn the meaning and purpose of the

world and our life in it, as to know the purpose and working of a lathe or a drop forge?

There have been some few folks who said there was no idea behind the world at all. It was just an accident—a horrible accident, they usually call it. But not many people are satisfied with that. There is not much sense to it. It will not stand close examination. Suppose we see a great automobile factory turning out a thousand finished machines a day. Suppose we asked some one of the workmen, “Who started this factory and who runs it?” And suppose he were to tell us, “Oh, it just happened. There was a lot of scrap iron lying around loose and it just came together and now there is an automobile factory.” We would look at him closely and wonder whether it was safe to have him loose on the streets without a keeper. When we look around and see the world producing machines far more wonderful than automobiles—living, thinking men, and the civilization they build it seems more idiotic to say it just happened without a purpose than to say it of an automobile factory.

If it has an idea behind it—What is it? Jesus answered that question a long time ago in a way that has struck men as sensible and true. He said the world was designed

to be a *home*—a place where God's children could live together in peace and happiness and love. He taught men to pray for the coming of that time when He said, "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven." He thought of all men as brothers, children of the same great Father who loved them all. God made the world and took men into partnership in the job of finishing it and making it into a place where every man got a fair chance and a square deal, and where every man gave his share of work and kindness and love. As a man named Paul put it a few years later—"God hath made all men of one blood to dwell together." That is the big idea.

It sounds good and it is no wonder that men have been willing to live and die for it. But you may well ask, "How do you know it is true?" Here is one answer, "It works." Wherever men have tried to work this idea of Jesus, that they are brothers and children of one Father who loves them and who wants to make the world a place full of love and good-will, wherever they have quit killing each other and tried to save, quit hating each other and tried to love, quit cheating each other and tried to be just, the world has been a lot better and happier place to live in. Be-



cause the idea of Jesus does work wherever men give it a chance, is the best reason I know of for believing it is true.

But there is another question—“What is the idea behind your own life?” Is there a plan and purpose there or is it just hit or miss? When you want things to go right in a machine room you have the cogs on one wheel fit into the cogs of the other exactly. If they don’t there is some sort of a hitch and things don’t go right. The reason things do not go better in the world is that men do not always fit into the idea behind the whole thing—a fair brotherhood of helpfulness. When the cogs in men’s minds fit into the cogs of God’s purpose of making the world a homelike place, when they both have the same idea, that will be the Kingdom of God on earth. And we move up a little closer to it every time that any one of us lets the idea of fairness and unselfishness get into action.

## XVIII

### A Good Scout

WHAT would you like to have written about you on your tombstone after you are gone? I'm sure of one thing—none of us would want to have any lies carved in stone. All the flowery things any one can think of will not fool the people that knew us, and the rest we don't care about. A real man would rather pass for what he actually is and what folks know he is, than have a lot of false labels tied on him. A man was going through a cemetery once, reading the praises written on the stones and said, "Where are all the bad people buried?" For it looked, on reading the inscriptions, as though only angels were buried in that graveyard, and we do not bury angels, only men and women, with faults as well as virtues. It was a wise man as well as an honest one who had written on his gravestone:

*Here lies John Jones  
Further particulars will be given at the  
Judgment Day.*

The only inscription that counts is the one written in the minds of the people who knew us, and that is bound to be there, no matter what we do. What would you like people to say about you, then, and have them say it, not to be polite, but because they mean it?

I think I'd be satisfied with this—" *He was a good scout.*" There are no frills about it; nothing fancy. It is every-day stuff. But it wears well, and it kind of gets down to the heart of things. It means more than that a man is a "jolly good fellow." It may not mean that at all. It means that a man has "sand"; there is no "yellow streak" in him; he is not a "quitter." You can count on him for a lift when you need one and he will not make a whole lot of fuss about it.

In the oldest and best story book in the world—the Bible—there is a story of a man who was a good scout, a man named Caleb. It was not just a title that was given him; that was his business. He was a scout, one of twelve scouts sent to spy out the land that belonged to his people the Israelites, but of which the Philistines were in possession. He had some qualities which show what "a good scout" is made of, whether he lived several thousand years ago or to-day, and he is a good man to know.

For one thing, he had his *nerve* with him. The leader of his people, Moses, wanted to know whether there was any chance for them to beat the Philistines, if it came to a fight for their rights, and Caleb went and took a look at them and said, "Sure, we can beat them." Ten of the men who went along with him got "cold feet." They said, "Look at those fellows. They are bigger than we are. We look like grasshoppers beside them. The best thing we can do is to keep under cover." And they hunted for cover. But Caleb brought back some good samples of the things that grew there and wanted to go and take the country for his people.

That kind of "sand" is a part of every good scout. If you don't believe in yourself, don't blame other folks for not believing in you. Of course, nobody has much use for the swell-head "know-it-all," and he usually gets in bad before very long. But a healthy self-confidence is not conceit and Caleb was not conceited. He knew it was a big job he was facing. He knew his own limitations. But he wasn't afraid to tackle it. More men fail for want of grit than fail for want of ability. Caleb didn't get his chance then; the "quitters" were in the majority. But years later, when they were looking for lead-

ers, it was no accident that they picked Caleb for one of them. He had shown what he was made of. It always works that way. Whether it is a job in the shop or anywhere else, "sand" is a good thing to mix in with it.

"Somebody said that it couldn't be done  
But he with a chuckle, replied  
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he tried.  
So he buckled right in with a trace of a grin  
On his face. If he worried he hid it.  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done—and he did it."

Another thing that made Caleb a good scout was that he could make up his own mind. He and his partner were out-numbered ten to two. Ten for quitting; two for going on. But he didn't vote with the majority just because every one else thought that way. He was right and the ten were wrong, as frequently happens.

Can you make up your own mind? Plenty of men never do. They never know what they think until some one tells them. Some always think just what the rest of the crowd around them do. They like to be on the winning side. I've seen people wait to buy their colors after a football game is over, so as to be sure to have the winning colors.

We never know what politics some men have till after the election is over. Then they do a great deal of shouting and say, "I told you so." The man who deserves the title of a good scout is one who can decide for himself what he believes is right, and go ahead with it, whether the majority think or do the same thing or not.

The last thing about Caleb to remember is this: He wasn't always looking for a soft snap. When his people finally won the land, years afterwards, and divided it up, Caleb got the first choice. Part of the land was in the valley, good farm land. Part was in the hills, rocky, steep and a hard row to hoe. A good many men would have taken all the valley they could get. Caleb said, "Give me some in the hills." He didn't want to have Easy Street all to himself and own the only house in it. He was willing to share a good thing with some one else. Do you know the fellow who wants to keep all the easy jobs for himself—carry the light end of the beam and let the other chap take the heavy end? There are lots of them. They may be "smart"; but there are lots of better things in the world than being "smart." Being a good scout is a better thing any day.

## XIX

### “We Carry Nothing We Can’t Recommend”

**T**HERE is a store down-town which has this sign hung up in the window where it can be seen all the time: “We carry nothing we can’t recommend.” It is a large promise to make, but if it is lived up to, it ought to create confidence. That is the kind of a store I would like to trade with, one where they sold me something, not merely because they could get my money for it, but because they believed the goods were absolutely dependable.

I am sure you will all agree that it is a good motto for a store. In the long run, the stores that do a big business in the same place year after year are the ones that put their reputation behind their goods and sell only the things they can honestly recommend for use.

If it is a good motto for a store, why isn’t it a good motto for a man: “We carry noth-

ing we can't recommend"? If that is the kind of a store we like to deal with, isn't it the kind of a man we like to live with, one who carries nothing he can't recommend to other people? Now, of course, none of us could live up to that motto entirely. We all do things and act in ways which we wouldn't recommend to other people as the best thing to do. But it is a pretty good thing to aim at, and the ideal that we honestly try to reach is the most important thing about any of us. The good man is not the one who never makes any mistakes, but the man who is headed in the right direction.

There is a great deal of difference between the things men "carry," the things they do in their own lives, and the things they advise other people to do. More difference than there ought to be. Many a man will say, "Don't do as I do ; do as I say." They have a fine, glittering line of advice for other people, but they do not follow it themselves. The worst part of it frequently is that they do not even try to follow it themselves. They are in about the same position as a grocer who recommends pure food, and yet sells over the counter cheap, adulterated stuff.

The thing which really counts, of course,



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is not what we say, but what we do. People pay far more attention to our example than they do to our good advice. A wise man said several years ago, “What you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say.” The things we really recommend every day to our children and friends are the things we do. I once heard a man commanding his little boy, with a string of oaths, not to swear. How much good do you think it did to tell the boy not to swear when the man was swearing all the time himself? Now, I believe every man cares, in his best moments, at any rate, about the kind of an example he gives, and the influence he exerts. I want to put this question up to you and see if you don't think it is a fair one for all of us, and one we really ought to care about. It is an old jingle :

“ What kind of a world would this world be,  
If every one in it were just like me? ”

Would it be a better place or a worse? How would you like to live in it? If you wouldn't like to live in it, isn't it about time to change something in yourself?

An old man gave this as a rule of life once : Act as you would want every one else in the world to act. It is a large order, but

isn't it a fair rule, and a pretty good one to follow?

If what you do—the habits and purposes you have, are not good enough to give to every one else—*are they good enough for you?*

## XX

### How Joe Got Out of Jail

**T**HERE is a story in the Bible about the adventures of a young fellow down in Egypt named Joseph. If a newspaper reporter of to-day were writing up the story for the evening edition of his paper, he would probably head it: "How Joe got out of Jail." He would play up the main features of the story in an interesting and exciting way, for the story of Joseph would give him some fine material, more thrilling than nine-tenths of the moving picture films that are made. For that matter, the story of Joseph has already been made into a first-class moving picture feature film.

There are two things about Joseph in jail down in Egypt that are particularly worth noticing. One is the way he got in. The other is the way he got out.

You will remember that Joseph was the youngest of twelve brothers and the chances are that he was a little bit spoiled by his father. At any rate his brothers were jealous

of the attention that he had and made up their minds that they would be better off without him. So they sold him to a passing caravan of traders going down to Egypt and then told his father he had been killed, taking back his coat, dyed in sheep's blood, to bolster up their story. These traders took Joseph down to Egypt and in turn sold him to an Egyptian as a servant. While he was working in this man's house there came to him a temptation to betray his master's honor and trust. He was man enough to refuse to do it. His refusal cost him his liberty and put his life in danger, for the one whose offer he had spurned started false stories about him and he was thrown in jail to await execution.

Now, the reasoning which Joseph did and which got him into jail was of a kind which is not by any means too common. He got down there in that strange country and found things were about as bad morally as they could be. In people in whom he expected to find honor and uprightness, he found dishonor and immorality. It was a good deal of a shock and temptation. A great many men would have reasoned like this—"Well, as long as every one else is crooked, what is the use of me trying to keep straight? I am

only one and one doesn't count for much against a big majority. So I might as well not be peculiar but join in with the rest of the crowd." But Joseph wasn't made out of that kind of stuff. He reasoned like this: "Well, as long as there is so much blackness and dirt down here, as long as nearly every one else seems pretty crooked, there is all the more reason for *one* man to be straight and sound and true. There is all the more reason for one man, at least, to stand up to the best he knows." And he stood up for it. I think it is a pretty good kind of reasoning.

A great many men come up to the city every year from the small towns and the country. A man can find whatever he looks for in a big city and there are always plenty of opportunities waiting for a fellow to go wrong. He sees a great many people going that way and he is tempted to say, "Oh, what's the use? This is a bad town. There is no sense in staying out of the swim. I might as well do what every one else does." Sometimes a man quotes to himself the old proverb, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," and so lets go of his own standards of honor and decency. Or a man gets into a crowd of workmen and finds a lot of crooked practices going on, petty cheating of the

kind a man always has a chance to do and says to himself, "Go on and be a 'good fellow.' No use making yourself disliked by being a stickler. You might as well get 'yours' with the rest." And he does.

Joseph's brand of reasoning is a whole lot better: "If this is a bad town or a bad crowd, there is all the more need for one man to be straight, since that is the kind of man it needs most." It is better, because down in their hearts people respect a man with that kind of backbone more than they do a spineless jelly-fish, and it wins in the end as it did for Joseph.

He got out of jail in a queer way—by taking up another fellow's troubles when he already had enough of his own. The king had thrown two of his servants in jail and one of them had a strange dream that troubled him. He told it to Joseph and Joseph sympathetically told him what he thought it meant and later the servant got out of jail and was restored to his place. Then when the king was troubled with dreams and wanted to know their meaning the servant thought of Joseph and the way he had helped him, and sent for him. So Joseph interpreted the king's dream and was released from prison and started on the way to leadership. His release

came through sharing another man's troubles in addition to his own. He fulfilled his own dream by trying to interpret the other man's. This was as unusual as the way he got in. Many men would have said to the king's servant, "Don't come to me with your troubles. I have enough of my own. I should worry about what's bothering you. Haven't I got enough hard luck already?" So they would have hugged their own little piece of misfortune and gotten sore at the world generally. You know lots of people who do that. It is the surest way to make your troubles worse. Joseph's way is just as good here to-day as it was back in Egypt centuries ago. The surest way to lighten your own hard load is to take a little interest in the man who has it just as bad or a bit worse. It takes you out of yourself and the sympathy for some one else and the help you can give him help much towards carrying your own trouble. "Cast your bread upon the waters and it will come back buttered."

## XXI

### Play it Safe vs. Take a Chance

**O**UT at the baseball game the other day a man had made a good clean hit and got to second base on it. There were two men coaching him, one at first and one at third. The runner on second was anxious to steal third, so as to be able to get home on the first hit made. Both the men who were coaching him shouted at the same time, but they gave him different directions. "Play it safe!" yelled the man at first. "Take a chance!" called the man on third. The base runner had to decide for himself which was the best advice.

Those two voices come to all of us, sometimes in the advice of friends; sometimes in the voice that seems to come out of our own heart. They come on many different occasions. One says, "Take a chance!" The other says, "Play it safe!"

Just to illustrate: I know a man working in a shop whose brother went out to Western Canada and took up a claim on some land. This brother wrote back and told him to come



out and do the same. "It's pretty hard going now," he wrote, "and it will be for two or three years, but after that you will have a good paying farm which will grow more valuable every year." "Take a chance," something inside seemed to say to him, as he thought of the prospect of getting a good stake in a new country. "Play it safe," something else seemed to tell him. "You have a job here. It isn't much, to be sure, and hasn't much future, but it is safe and gives you enough to live on." So he followed the second voice and "played it safe." He lacked the nerve to let go of what he had and make a venture in a new country.

Perhaps in his case he did right. Every one isn't fitted for a pioneer life. But the point worth remembering is that many men do let good opportunities go by, simply because they are afraid to take them and want to be on the safe side. "Safety First" is a fine motto for a railroad or a shop, and a good one for many things in life, but a poor one for the whole of a man's life. Here is a man, for instance, who has a chance, by study and extra work, perhaps extending over a long time, to fit himself for a better job. "Go ahead and do it," he tells himself. "You will win out. Take a chance!" Then some-

thing else seems to say, "Oh, what's the use? I can't put in my nights and extra time studying. I might put in all that time and work and then get nothing out of it. Better be on the safe side." That is the voice hundreds of men listen to, and through it they miss fine opportunities.

Of course, men hear the same two counsels in connection with another thing—*marriage*. A young man looks at the prospect of a home of his own and the happiness it means, and there is always a risk to it. He has to take a chance on being able to support a wife and family. There is the chance of sickness and perhaps unemployment. And many a fellow has listened to the other voice which tells him, "Play it safe. Keep your money for yourself. You will have a lot more to spend on yourself than if you were trying to keep two or three." So he does keep his wages all to himself and frequently loses the best happiness and success life has for any one.

Now, of course, when a man marries, he wants to have a clear-headed view of things. He wants to be reasonably sure his prospects justify it. But a good marriage is the best thing that ever happens to a man, and it is a poor calculation which makes a man miss it because he is too timid and selfish to take a

chance. This does not apply at all to the thousands of men who never marry and set up a home of their own because they are helping to support others dependent on them, father or mother or sisters or brothers. There is no finer or more heroic class of men on earth than them. But it does apply to the fellow who thinks so much of his own good time or being safely fixed on Easy Street, that he misses the finer prize of a home.

The same thing happens in connection with another fine thing—*friendship*. I know a man who ran into a good bit of trouble last winter. He got sick, lost several weeks at his work, and was “up against it,” as we say, pretty hard. All the time he was complaining because he didn’t have any friends to “see him through.” He said he could not understand it. I could understand it all right and after he got well and back to work I told him why it was. He was too selfish to have any friends. He wanted to *have* friends, but he was too close-fisted to *be* one. And “the only way to have a friend is to be one.” Friends are an investment. You have to put something in before you can take any profits out.

To make a real friend means to take a big risk. He may get into trouble and it will

cost you something to help him out. He may do something wrong and the fact that you are his friend will hurt your reputation a little bit. So many a man plays it safe. He is unwilling to get tied up in a close manner with some one's else affairs and interests. He saves a good deal of time and more or less money. But the man who is too close and small to have a real friendship, about which he is not thinking all the time, "What am I going to get out of it?" has missed a whole lot out of his life. There is a verse in the Bible that gets just about right this whole matter of giving one's time and help instead of saving it: "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it will come back to you after many days."

## XXII

### Forget It!

**H**OW many thousand times we have heard the words! Sometimes good-naturedly, spoken with a laugh. We thank a man for something he has done for us and he says, "Forget it!" But at other times it is jerked out with an ill-natured snarl. "Aw, forget it!" a man says, when his attention is called to a thing. There is a world of difference in the way a thing is said.

I want to repeat those old words good-naturedly to-day and say "Forget it!" There are a great many things which it is a good plan to forget. It doesn't do any good to keep dangling them before your eyes all the time. There are some people who never seem able to forget the mistakes a fellow has made at one time or other. They hate to give a man a chance with a clean slate. If you say to them, "Jones seems to be a pretty good sort of chap," they will say, "Yes, but ——" and then they will tell you of some trouble Jones had about five years ago and

half the time they have got it wrong or else added a lot of things to it that are not so. Here are some verses I read the other day that put the thing very well :

“ If you see a tall fellow ahead of the crowd,  
A leader of music, marching fearless and proud,  
And you know of a tale whose mere telling aloud  
Would cause his proud head to in anguish be  
bowed,  
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.

“ If you know of a thing that will darken the joy  
Of a man or a woman, a girl or a boy,  
That will wipe out a smile or the least way annoy  
A fellow, or cause any gladness to cloy,  
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.”

There is good sense as well as kindness to it. Suppose a fellow did slip up on something. Why not forget it and give him a chance to “come back ” ? Don't you know that the world would be a much better place if a few more hammers were laid aside and some things forgotten which it does not help any one to keep harping on ? Our little part of the world in particular would be much better, at any rate.

It is a pretty good plan to forget something else, too,—whatever a man may have in the way of a grudge or “bad feeling ” which is waiting for a chance to “get even.”

The reason is a very simple one : It costs too much to remember it. A feeling of bitterness which a man has against some one else is a very expensive thing ; it is bound to spoil and embitter and make sour a great deal of his time and he himself loses more even when his chance to "get even" comes. There is much worth thinking about in the story of the Irishman who got mad at a friend of his who had a habit of slapping him on the chest when he met him and breaking the cigars in his vest pocket. "I'll fix him," he said ; "I'll teach him to break my cigars. I've got a stick of dynamite in my vest that he will hit the next time he strikes me, and I guess that will cure him of the habit, all right." Poor Pat didn't figure that the dynamite would hurt him a good deal more than the other fellow. Carrying around a feeling of hatred or nursing a grudge is much like Pat's stick of dynamite. It will hurt *us* more than the other man. It will spread a feeling of discontent and unhappiness over our days that would otherwise be light-hearted. I know a man who lost a good job five years ago through untrue stories that were told about him by another man in the shop. It was a mean, cowardly trick. The man who was injured got another place,

which eventually proved a better one. But he never forgot for a day the wrong done him or gave up for a moment his intention to "get back" at the other man in some way. He has been glum and miserable ever since. He has suffered ten times as much unhappiness from his feeling of hatred and revenge as he did from the loss of the job. He would have been a much happier man if he had forgotten it.

Of course it isn't easy to forget things like that. There is only one way we can do it—think of something else. Here is a good plan of a man who was full of good ideas, a man named Paul:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,—think on these things."

And we may add—Forget the rest.



## XXIII

### Where Do You Live?

**I**F some one should ask you, "Where do you live?" the answer would be easy. You live on Main Street or Third Avenue, or some other street, and that is all there is to it.

Of course it is an answer to the question; but in a very real way it is not the whole answer. A man lives in a certain town and in a certain street, but beyond that every man lives in the world he makes for himself—in the things his mind is interested in and the desires he has. Two men may reside next to each other on the same street, and yet really live in a different world because they are interested in different things. Take four men, for instance, going to work in a street car in the morning. Each one is reading a newspaper. You watch them and you will see each man open his paper to a different page. One man opens right away to the sporting page and follows the game the day before between the Red Sox and the Athletics. The man next to him may not know a

home run from a base on balls ; he turns to the financial page to see whether Amalgamated Copper is going up or down. The next man is a politician hunting through his paper to see who got the street paving contract. While the man next to him may be a burglar, a "second-story" man, who is anxious to learn what families have gone away for the summer, so that he can find a possible empty house to rob. Four men, seated along together with their elbows touching, but with their minds hardly touching at all. Each lives in a different world.

We make our own world to live in by the things we select out of our surroundings to which we give our interest and attention. We all make a different selection to a large extent. So we really create a little world for ourselves out of the bigger one, just as we create for ourselves the color and sound in the world. Color is not in things themselves ; it is in our eyes. It is determined by the rate of vibration at which the waves of light strike the eye. In the same way sound is created by our own ears, receiving differently moving sound waves.

But the question, "Where do you live?" goes deeper even than that. It may mean, "What level do you live on in your desires

and thinking?" A man's life may be well compared to a three-story house with a basement, first floor, and top floor. A man's desires, the things he longs for and most enjoys, determine whether he is living in the cellar of his nature or on the top floor. An uncivilized savage lives in the basement of life, the rude level of animal appetites and passions. The upper stories of his house of life have not been constructed as yet. He knows little or nothing of art, industry, trade or social organization. The gratification of his crude appetites satisfies nearly all his wants. The history of the world is the story of men working up out of the basement into the top stories of culture and civilization.

But the savage is not the only one who lives in the basement. Any one to whom the principal interest and enjoyment in life is in the things he gets to eat and drink, the satisfying of his appetites and passions, lives in the basement of his nature. That is the part first developed in the savage, just as a cellar is the first part of a house ; but it is not meant for a man to stay in. The only use of a basement is to support something higher and better and the only right use of the bodily appetites is to give the strength to support a higher and finer kind of life on top.

We would call a man foolish who had a fine house with upper stories full of sunlight, who yet lived in the basement all the time. What are we going to call the man, then, who rarely ever occupies the best part of his nature but finds his chief living-room in its lower story? A basement room is an unhealthy place in which to live. It breeds consumption. In the basement of their natures men degenerate.

We may call the street floor of a man's life his busy active life at his trade or business, where he is most of the time. Without enough labor and exertion, the world would soon be a dull place. But a man whose interest lives in the workroom all the time soon becomes as much of a machine as the other machines in the shop. There was written on a man's tombstone once this sentence, "Born a man, Died a grocer." That told in a few words the story of a man whose only interest, that of trade, crowded out everything else worth while.

We live in life's top stories in the things we do which will not put any cash in our pocket or gratify any physical appetite, but give exercise to the finer powers and enjoyments of our natures. *Friendship* is a top story with a fine, large view out into other

lives. *Home*, when we make it a place of unselfishness and love, is a top story where the finest things in life develop and grow, a true place of sunlight. *Books, music, art, wholesome recreation* that give zest and fitness for work, all these are things which lift a man up to the best uses of life.

The highest and brightest floor in every man's house of life is reached when he looks out towards the sky and God. If from hurry or indifference we rarely ever pray, we are missing a high and useful privilege. Prayer may seem to be a strange thing to be talking about in a shop, unsubstantial and unreal, but prayer is a *real* thing, just as real as an electric current, which you cannot see or hear at all, but which you know from actual experience can accomplish work. Prayer does things for people. It makes them stronger for the kind of a life they want to live. It gives them courage in a hard place and hope on a dark day. Prayer is not a pious monologue by a man with himself. It is not a long string of words. It is a man's acquaintance with his Creator and Father.

There is one easy way to prove its value. Here it is : Try it !

## XXIV

### What Does God Look Like?

“**W**HAT does God look like?” It is a question that every child has asked at some time or other and a question no one can answer. It is a natural question for a child to ask; he hears about God; is taught to say his prayers at night; and naturally wonders what God looks like.

While it is a child's question in just that form, it has been a grown man's question in its real meaning as long as men have lived on earth and will continue to be so as long as men exist. It makes no difference what creed a man possesses or does not possess; whether he ever goes near a church or not. There is no man who ever takes serious thought of things but who wonders at times what is the nature of the great Power above and behind the world. Each man makes for himself at least some kind of a rough, crude answer to the question, “What is God like?”

The answers are as different as the men themselves are different. The principal trouble with the idea of God that many men have is that it is not really a man's idea. It is a little boy's idea of God, which they have carried over from childhood without thinking very much about it. Their ideas of the world and the things in it have grown larger, more worthy of the reality. But often they still keep a child's idea of God and that is one principal reason why religion does not mean more to a great many people. The Apostle Paul once said, "When I became a man I put away childish things." It is a good thing to replace a childish idea of God with one more suitable to the mind of a grown man.

Some men, for instance, think of God as a great *Policeman* who delights to order people around and make rules for them to obey. They do not exactly put a blue uniform and a helmet on their idea of God in their imagination, but the main features are just about the same. They think of God in terms of law and punishment and penalties; they think of the Almighty mainly as One who wants to keep people from having a good time. Consequently they look on religion with dislike, just as a small boy dislikes a

policeman. A child may be excused for having such an idea, but it is a childish thing for a man to have it.

Others think of God as though He were an exalted *Bookkeeper*, carefully entering up a black mark against a man every time he does a wrong thing, drawing up a large bill of damages to be settled for by punishment in the next world. Still other people, when they think of God at all, think of Him as a sort of kind-hearted old *Santa Claus*, whom they try to keep on the good side of by going to church and making prayers. They think of a prayer much as a child thinks of a letter to Santa Claus, a sort of a charm which will bring them just about what they want.

If all these ideas are childish things to be put away when we grow up—what shall we put in their place? A man might say, "Why put anything at all? Why not give up the idea of God entirely as good enough for children but not necessary for a grown man?" The answer is very simple. Simply because man's mind needs the idea of God. As some one has said, "Man is incurably religious." It has been in men's minds since history began and no changes in living or advances in learning have ever crowded it



out. The idea of God is the *only* thing which has satisfied men for any length of time, as they have looked out on the greatness and mystery of the world.

A man came to Jesus once with this very question, "Tell us what God is like. Show us the Father and it will be enough." Jesus answered him, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In other words, He told men that the qualities they saw in Him, the love for them, the desire to help them and willingness to suffer for them, were the very qualities of God Himself. He did not give a definition of God in long words. He drew some plain pictures. He told a story of a Samaritan who came along a road and met a fellow half beaten to death and who took care of him at a great deal of trouble and He said, "God is like that." He told a story of a father who was sorrowful because his son was away off, lost in a far country, and who saw him coming back and joyfully runs out to meet him and forgives him. And Jesus said, "God is like that." In His own death Jesus gave the clearest answer to the question, "What is God like?" As He was put to death by the hatred and evil passions of men, the cross on which He died has become a symbol of the truth that God suffers from

the sins of men but loves them through it all.

That is a man's idea of God—large enough, strong enough for any man's need. How do I know it is true? I believe it is true for the same reason that I believe there is such a thing as electricity—It works. I can see it accomplish results just as plainly as I can see the street car move. I believe the current in the wire is a reality, even though no man on earth ever saw electricity. No man has seen God but wherever men have believed in the kind of a God Jesus believed in, they have reached a higher, finer kind of manhood than they ever did before; there has been more of honor, pity, kindness, strength, enlightenment, freedom and progress than there ever was before. So I am ready to believe in that kind of a God. It makes life more worth living to me; it makes me more able to live the kind of a life I know to be best. And wherever I see an act of unselfishness, of love or of pity, in that very act of unselfishness and love I have a picture of what God is like.

## XXV

### What to Make Out of Your Mind

**W**HAT are you making out of your mind?

I want to convince you, if I can, that it is worth your while to study out an answer to that question. You needn't give the answer to any one but yourself. But I'd like you to find an answer, and then tell it to yourself and see if you like it.

You are making *something*, there's no doubt about that. The brain changes its form to some extent and its weight every day. Your mind is different to-day than it was yesterday. The slang expression we frequently hear, "a new wrinkle," stands for a real thing. Every time you think hard over a question your brain gets a new wrinkle in the gray matter. The more wrinkles, the better brain it is.

So that you are making something, whether you intend to or not. You can't say to yourself, "Oh, I'm not bothering about my mind. It's just growing." Minds never "just grow," any more than a garden does. You have to "make" a garden by

downright hard work. You can't do any fooling about it. If you don't work and *make* a garden you'll have something else—a patch of weeds. You have to “make” a mind that is good for anything by downright hard work, or you will have a mental patch of weeds inside your head. And the market price of weeds is never very high.

Think for two or three minutes of the choice you have as to what to make out of your mind.

You can make a *Waste Basket* out of it. Plenty of people do. And a waste basket is a nice thing to have. There's nothing disreputable about a waste basket, nor is there necessarily anything unclean. It is full of various odds and ends, many of them interesting in themselves, letters and newspapers, but they are all jumbled up together and have no relation to each other, and the whole thing is worth nothing. Now a good many people have a mind like a waste basket. It is full of scraps of information, all kinds of odds and ends of knowledge, miscellaneous facts and bits of gossip, all jumbled up together. I have a neighbor who knows all kinds of interesting things about a great number of occupations and trades. There is only one thing that he does not know, ap-

parently,—that is, how to do one thing *well*. His mind is made up of scraps, out of which he can make nothing worth while. It is a waste basket.

You can make a *Cash Register* out of your mind. You can think pennies or nickels or dollars until about all your mind is good for is to ring up the money that goes into the cash drawer. The only thing that will make a cash register work properly is some kind of a sale, some kind of a money transaction, and that is all that will ever cause some men's minds to get into action. They are like the cash register, whose little bell rings every time a nickel goes into the drawer. So they begin to sing whenever they ring up cash.

A sort of a *Bureau Trunk* is what some people make out of their minds. Their heads are full of clothes. Instead of a normal head, full of all kinds of human interests and sympathies, it is stuffed with dry-goods, things to wear. We frequently find a head like this on a woman, but not every time, by any means. I know a good many men in whose heads, if you took an X-ray picture of them, you would be able to find a large assortment of suits, neckties, and fancy vests,

Some men, and you know them, have made a *Garbage Can* out of their minds. That is a strong expression, but it is no exaggeration. What was given to them as a container for knowledge, truth, power, they have filled up with filth. Some unclean story is always coming out of their lips like the bad odor from an uncovered garbage can. They spoil whatever atmosphere they come into, on the street, store, or shop. They ought to be treated the same way as a garbage can is, be made to shut up. General Grant knew how to do it. An officer joined a group in which he was standing one day and started to tell a coarse, unclean story, asking as he began, "Are there any ladies present?" "No," Grant answered, "but gentlemen are." The story was not told.

The best thing to make out of your mind is what it was designed to be, a *tool chest*. That is what God intended it for when He gave it to you. By discipline of work and study, not necessarily in school, but anywhere, you can shape your brain into a kit of keen cutting tools. With a mind which, by dint of application, has learned to think and work, you can cut your way through tough problems. The best chisel with which

to carve out a place for yourself in the world is your head, sharpened to fine usefulness by using it on all occasions. The human mind is a complex assortment of tools, the most complicated, delicate and priceless machinery in the world. What are you doing to keep it sharpened?

It is not only as a worker that a man needs a sharp set of tools. The great problems of living are before us all, how to live, what to do, what not to do. It is a task for a clear head to decide what courses of action are going to make for our finest, most lasting welfare, and what things are going to be harmful in the end. For every one man who goes wrong because he is bad there are ten who have gone wrong because they never sat down and thought things *through*. They do things because some one else did, because it looked pleasant, and for most any other reason. It is poor business. The Apostle Paul has a good proposition to lay before us along this line. "Prove all things," he says. That is, don't follow the crowd blindly. Figure things out for yourself. And then, "Hold fast to that which is good." Make a good strong vise out of your mind, and hold on!

## XXVI

### Enter—The Ghost

**T**HERE are only two ghosts that any man need be afraid of. One is the Boy he used to be. The other is the Man that he might have been.

But every man is bound to meet these two shadowy figures, as they rise out of his memory and come before his imagination.

All other ghost stories he can dismiss as superstitions. People believed in ghosts in other generations and were positively afraid of them. But we do not bother very much about ghosts any more. We want things with a little more reality to them to think about. Yet there are times when there will rise up out of the dead past of each one of us these two figures of the Boy we once were and the Man we might have been, so real as to seem like a ghostly presence before us. Whether it is pleasant or sad to meet them depends on the way we have lived.

Think for a minute of the Boy that you used to be. Sometimes it is a very happy thing for a man to think back of himself as a



boy. Sometimes there is no remorse or bitterness in a man's heart as the figure of the Boy he was in the days gone by comes before his mind. That man is to be envied. He has kept faith with the Boy, and the boy's hopes and the boy's clean, pure heart. In other cases, it is not by any means a pleasant thing for a man to look back and think of himself as a care-free, unspoiled boy. Did you ever hear any verses like this :

“I remember, I remember  
The fir trees dark and high ;  
I used to think their arching tops  
Were close against the sky.  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from heaven  
Than when I was a boy.”

I think those verses describe a very common feeling that the man the boy has grown up into is not quite so sound and true a person as the boy was.

It is a good thing for all of us to look that Boy we used to be squarely in the face once in a while, just to see if we can meet his gaze. Can't you get a very clear picture of him, open faced, clear eyed, and hopeful as he looked out into the future years and expected such fine things of the man he was to grow

up into? As he comes near in memory and looks you in the eye, doesn't he seem to ask you what you have done with those hopes he had of you? Is it hard to bear his gaze? Have you played fair with him?

Of course the Boy expected too much of the man. You probably expected to be President of the United States by this time. I did. The teacher used to tell me every Friday afternoon at school that I had a chance. I never stopped to figure out that about twenty-five million other boys had just as good a chance as I had. At least you were going to be a millionaire, or the president of a railroad. It makes us laugh now. It is not our failing to measure up to those extravagant expectations which makes a man ashamed when he thinks of himself as a boy. It is the fact that the boy always thought of growing up into a clean, straight, honored man that causes regret. That boy back there in the other years believed intensely in some fine things—in goodness, in true women, in God. Have you kept the faith that he had?

Men, listen: There isn't a finer achievement in life or one that will bring you more pleasure than to know that you have kept the best things that Boy handed over to you. Oh, I don't mean that a man is spotless. Men

are not plaster saints. Or that he hasn't made bad mistakes. We all have. But I mean that he hasn't let go entirely on the clean mind, the tender heart, the faith of his boyhood days. With all my heart, I hope that for you.

Here are the words of a man who saw absolutely straight on this question. You will think they were written by a preacher, but they were not. They were written by a sporting editor of a New York daily, and one of the best in the country, Grantland Rice :

“ I knew a kid one day

Who looked across wide orchard lanes of white  
To where a fellow held the laurelled way  
Of fame and name and fortune in the fight ;  
A kid who heard Life calling and who turned  
To catch the echo of far marching feet  
Where crimson fires of glory flashed and burned  
Along the borders of the swarming street.

“ I knew a fellow who

Would give life's motley fame again to be  
In orchard drifts where lost winds wander through  
And whisper sighing from the bending tree ;  
Who dreams at each gray dusk within his den  
Of old-time honor and old-fashioned truth  
And cries to God to lead him back again  
And leave him with the clean, brave faith of  
youth.”

The other ghost that haunts a man is the figure of the *Man that he might have been*.

Many a man has tried to dodge him and get away from him and never think of him. They have been able to evade every one else, even to "give the slip" to the police. They cannot throw this dim, disturbing figure of the Man they might have been off their trail. And the bitterest part of their hours of failure is the knowledge that "It might have been," words some one has called the saddest ever spoken.

By this I do not mean just the feeling that we might have been different and better men. We all know that. That universal feeling of failing to make the most out of ourselves is a vastly different feeling than that of the man who has missed almost entirely his possibilities through disuse or abuse of his powers. A minister friend of mine talked the other day to a former state senator locked up in the county jail for embezzlement. This senator said to him, "And to think I had hoped to go to Congress;"—and then he added slowly, "I might have done it, too." The hardest thing about that prison cell was the presence of that other figure, only a thought in his mind, to be sure, but just as real as the iron bars,—the man he missed being.

Well, what of it, do you ask? Just these two things. First, most of you men before

me have half your lives, and the best half, in front of you. Assert your best possibilities continually, and you will never know the keen misery of this ghost of "might have been." Secondly, this: if I didn't believe it I would quit my job as a preacher to-day: God can make new possibilities, even to the man who has spoiled his chance and his powers, not the same but fine ones still. He can give new power to any man who will go into partnership with Him. No one is ever "down and out" in God's sight.

## XXVII

### Personal Efficiency

**T**HERE is an old proverb which says that a fool can ask more questions in an hour than seven wise men can answer in a year. All I am going to do to-day is to ask questions, and some of you may be reminded of that old proverb before I get through. For I am going to ask more questions than you can answer. I am going to ask personal questions about intimate things which are none of my business. I am going to ask embarrassing questions. And yet I expect to get out alive. For I do not want you to give the answers to any one but yourselves. They are not my business, and I do not mean to make them my business. But I do want you to make it *your* business to look yourself squarely in the face and find out some interesting things about yourself.

A plain, short question is a moral bracer. It brings a man face to face with realities, and has as enlivening an effect as a plunge in cold water. Much of the time we live in

a kind of mental fog and are so "easy" in our estimate of ourselves that we are liable to deceive ourselves on some very important things. So I think some of these questions on Personal Efficiency are well worth going over. I am not going to talk about every question. I just want to have you put it squarely before your mind and see what kind of an answer you would honestly have to give to it and whether you like the answer,—and what you are going to do about it.

These questions are not all my own. Some of them were asked by Mr. E. E. Purinton in a magazine in a series of charts on efficiency, the idea being to furnish a sort of gauge to tell what a man is good for, just as you can determine how much water is in a boiler by a glass gauge on the outside. I went through the mill myself of having to honestly answer "no" to one or two questions to which I wish I could have answered "yes." The experience did me good, and I believe it will do you good to measure yourself, too.

Here, for instance, is a question which makes a man "sit up": *Is your wife happier than just before she married you?* That is a fair question. She ought to be. Not in the same romantic way, perhaps, but on the whole she ought to be happier. Of course,

no man ever knows just exactly how his wife feels about lots of things. Women are brave and have a fine way of smiling and making the best of things. But in a general way a man can know and it is a question which has much to do with a man's true measure.

Perhaps this second question has a good deal to do with the answer to the first: *Do you help your wife to solve her home and parenthood problems?* In other words, are you giving your home a square deal out of your time and thought or are you expecting your wife to take all the responsibility, with you contributing principally criticisms and an occasional grumble? Is it fair?

Here is a "poser": *Are you systematically overcoming your own physical and mental weakness?* It struck me when I saw that question that that was about the most important business any one could be about, strengthening the weak spots.

*Have you a surplus of energy so that you do not quickly get tired, vexed, "out of sorts," or despondent?* That is a good question to think over. Most of the time it is our own fault, due to some physical condition, if we are glum and blue and discouraged; if things "get on our nerves" and irritate us and we in turn irritate others. We can



change it, if we right conditions. Here is a question which will throw some light on the one preceding: *Are you in bed at ten o'clock four nights a week?*

Here are two questions on your social relations: *Are you a friend, thoughtful and helpful to all your neighbors?* There are a great many things which people say about a man about which he may well be perfectly indifferent. But this question, whether a man is a good friend or not, is one which no man can afford to neglect.

*Do you always vote for the best man, regardless of politics?* In other words, does some party manager pull the string and have you vote as he wishes, or do you own your own head?

*Are you saving a little money regularly?* The ability to weigh the future against the desires of the present is one of the surest tests of the degree of development of a man or a nation. The baby wants everything *now*; it never considers the needs of tomorrow. Some people never get out of babyhood. *Can you cheerfully go without luxuries to save for a purpose? Are you living within your means?*

Here are the last two questions I am going to ask,—both of them take account of

big things. I think they are important. *Do you spend any time every day in planning your future, studying your work and improving yourself?* It is worth much to a man to have an idea of what he wants to make out of himself, where he is going, so that he is not merely a chip pushed along by the current, but has the power of directing himself and going against the current of hard conditions when necessary, like a tug.

*Is your final ambition unselfish?* It is a foolish thing for a man to strive to be efficient without asking the question, efficient for what? Is it all simply for yourself, more money, more power, simply to enjoy it and keep it? Then the game is hardly worth the candle. Or do you desire to make the most out of all your powers so that others may benefit, that your family may be helped, and more able to help your town better, some good cause stronger? The man who lives and works with an unselfish ambition is bound to be a big success, no matter what happens.

## XXVIII

### Some Nominations for the Observation Ward

A FRIEND of mine was telling me the other day about a visit he had paid to a very interesting place, the observation ward of the Bellevue Hospital. You know the observation ward is the part of the hospital to which they send people about whom they are not quite sure whether they are sane or not. They put them in there for a few days and watch them to find out, if they can. From this observation ward a great many people are released, since the reason for their queer actions has been found to be temporary, sickness or other cause. Others, however, are passed on to the asylum as being actually insane.

Especially in summer the observation ward is crowded. People who do things out of the ordinary, or eccentric, are frequently sent there for watching, when they are perfectly sane. It is a strange collection of people. Some of the folks whom my friend saw and told me about have been very

interesting and started some thoughts I am going to pass on to you. The people he mentioned were all there because they were doing "queer" things. The thought that always came into my mind was that I could nominate some people I knew to be sent to the observation ward for doing things just as queer, or much more so. And yet no one ever sends them to the hospital to be observed.

Think it over with me in two or three cases.

There was one man there, sent by his relatives because he had started down the street in which he lived in Brooklyn, after taking a pocket full of change from the cash drawer of the store which he owned, and gave a quarter to every person he met. You can imagine there was something a good deal like a riot before he got very far. A good many people were anxious to meet him two or three times, and as the crowd grew, he was taken by the police to be "observed" for insanity. I agree perfectly that that was the best thing to do. A man who tries to give twenty-five cents to every one he meets is certainly out of his senses, and belongs in the Observation Ward. But I submit this: If we are going to send up there the man who gives something to everybody, then the

man who *never* gives *anything* to anybody belongs there, too. The man who *never* carelessly gives a quarter away is just as likely a candidate for the insane asylum as the fellow who tried to give one to every one. That may seem like wild exaggeration, but you just think it over long enough and I believe you'll agree with me. Better than that, you just watch how it operates on the great testing ground of life and experience and *I know* you will. The miser, the close fisted, downright "mean" person, has about as feeble minded an idea of how to get the most out of life in the way of well-being and happiness, and all the things that sane men value, such as self-respect, and the good opinion of associates, as the most hopeless case in the asylum. You find people like that most everywhere, but they really belong in the Observation Ward.

There was a good-natured, harmless sort of a man there, who had been sent in from the country because he was walking along the country roads all the time and was never able to give a very clear account of himself, or of where he was going or why. He seemed quite satisfied just to walk along the road looking, so he was picked up for a vagrant and sent to be watched to determine

his sanity. Which was the best thing to do with him, without a doubt. I have no criticism to make of that. What I do insist on is that some one else is just as fit for the Observation Ward, and that is the man who *never* cares to walk along a country road, who is quite blind to the beauty of the fields and trees. He is just as lacking on one side as the simple minded vagrant who just shifts from place to place is on the other, and the man who has lost his love for nature, as seen in the fields, forests and streams, who has lost in one way or another the capacity to enjoy simple things, such as the sights of the country or park, or the plain, simple pleasures which children bring, is, in the literal meaning of the word, "insane." The word "insane" means "not whole" and certainly such a man does not have in good condition all the faculties which God has given to him.

Another man had been sent to the Observation Ward for trying to count the stars. It was a kind of mania which had settled upon him, not permanent, the doctor said, but the only way to quiet him was to allow him to go to a window and look up in the sky, so that he could go on with his counting. He was well up into the hundred thousands when he was taken to the hospital, although

of course there are only a few thousand stars visible to the naked eye. It was a pitiable case—always looking up in the sky. But if we are going to doubt a man's sanity for that, how about the man who *never* looks up to the sky?—who never really sees a star, and who is never moved with wonder, or awe or reverence, as the thought of the immensity and mystery of the universe comes over him? Do you know of anything that is really more foolish or irrational than to live here on this globe a few years, as you and I do, set here in all its mystery and uncertainty and never give it a thought, never a moment's wonder as to what it all means, or what is behind the part we see, giving direction and force to the whole thing? The man who looks up into the heavens all the time is not a whit more insane than the man who never looks up in wonder and reverence. Back in the ancient days men felt the same wonder and humility they feel to-day when they realize how large creation is and how small they are. As one of them wrote :

“ When I consider Thy heavens . . . what  
is man that Thou art mindful of him? ”

Later another, greater Man looked up into the same sky and said, “ Our Father.” It is

a great experience when, with wonder and yet with faith, we can say the same words.

We use the word "half-witted" a good deal. There is a sense in which many men are really half-witted. And it is a poor way to be. Their wits are busy with the small half of this world they can see and touch, the here and now. For the rest, for the future, and that great power above, which Jesus taught us to call Father, he has no wits at all. They are all busy elsewhere. I think a man who does this all his life, giving his mind to his little corner alone when there is so much above to stir him to wonder, really belongs in the Observation Ward.

Have I sent you there? I hope not. I hope that every one of you has sympathies and interests which make him alive to all sides of life.



## XXIX

### “Hard Luck”

**M**OST of the old-fashioned superstitions that thrived generations ago are gone. Men no longer insult their intelligence by believing that a king can touch a child with scrofula and cure it by the Royal Touch. Yet nearly every one believed it once! We no longer fear the “evil eye” or witches and wizards. It is a happy thing for us all that they are gone.

Yet there is one superstition which hangs on like grim death. It is the superstition of Luck. It amounts in many cases to a sort of pagan idolatry, like the worship of an idol, and the doing of all sorts of tricks to gain the favor of the idol, carrying a rabbit’s foot, nailing up horseshoes and what not. Men talk about “hoodoos,” “jinxes” and mascots in a laughing way, but underneath the laugh very often is more or less of a real belief in mysterious things which cause bad luck.

We think of such belief in “hoodoos,” etc., as harmless. Frequently it is. And yet some-

times such a belief in Luck is the worst thing a man can have. For when a man comes to ascribe success and failure mainly to some arbitrary case of good luck or "tough luck," we usually look in vain for any more real downright hard work from that man. He gets to waiting for some lucky happening which shall move him over on Easy Street or to grumbling over some piece of "hard luck" that prevents his success. So he looks to the superstition of luck to explain what is caused by hard work. Haven't you all seen men watch some fellow who has won success by the hardest kind of effort, and then say enviously, "What a lucky fellow!"

It is a bad thing for a man to keep finding an easy and ready excuse for his failures. It makes him begin to pity himself rather than to stir himself up to hard work. It makes him think of himself as living in a world of blind chance rather than what he really is living in—a world of law.

The former manager of the St. Louis American Baseball Club, the Browns, made a talk not long ago to the Cleveland Advertising Club in which he referred to the curious belief in "jinxes" which thrives in baseball and in which he pointed out very clearly the danger we have just been talking about. He

was describing a baseball game in which a player he called "Red" had made a long hit which looked like a sure home run. By what appeared to be a lucky accident for the other team, the ball struck a stone near the center field fence and bounced into the center fielder's hands. This fielder made a long and brilliant throw to third base and just barely put the runner out. Groans came from the bench and the cry "hard luck!" was repeated on all sides. Men turned to each other and said, "Did you ever see anything like it?" or "The breaks are against us," an oft-repeated remark in a losing game.

As he passed the manager, the runner brushed his trousers and said, "Well, there is just my luck." The next inning the manager saw this player and said to him, "Red, in that play last inning, did you 'break' straight from the plate?" "I didn't notice," he said, "but I did look at the ball, I guess." It is a habit of many players at bat to look at the ball after hitting it, and by so doing lose speed in starting and direction in running as well. Such players usually run about ninety-five feet in reaching first base, a straight line distance of ninety feet.

Then the manager continued, "Red, how did you turn the bag at first?" "Wrong,"

he said, "wrong. It threw me out thirty feet beyond the line in making my turn." He meant that by not making a proper turn before reaching first and, if possible, turning the base on the left instead of the right foot, he was compelled to run much farther towards right field before getting himself squarely turned towards second.

"Then in the third place," the manager asked him, "why did you slow up at second?" He said, "Did you see that? I thought it was a sure home run." "Yes," the manager said, "but every base runner should make his plays, assuming that every break should be against him. It is never the player's fault, then, if he loses."

"Finally," the manager said, "why in the world did you slide to the right and directly into the baseman who was outside the bag, instead of to the left and away from the play?" The manager waited for no answer, but he thought of all the sympathy given to the player on account of his "hard luck," and he said to him, "*Four chances to make your own luck, any one of which, played properly, would have made a decision by the umpire at third unnecessary, and all four of which, played properly, would have advanced the play to the home plate, instead of third.*"

There was a case, as it frequently happens, of ten per cent. luck, perhaps, and ninety per cent. carelessness.

What many a man needs, more than anything on earth, is to quit talking and thinking about luck and chance, and think more about the ninety per cent. that he contributes to his own success.

There is one place where the blaming of hardship on “luck” is particularly harmful, because it blinds a man to the real causes of his failure, which lie in moral wrong and careless living. Back through years of indulgence and dissipation and carelessness, a man has sown the seeds of weakness, inefficiency and failure by thoughtless or vicious living, and then deceives himself and others by calling it a case of “hard Luck.” There is no Luck about it. It is simply reaping what he has sown. It is not chance but Law—God’s Law—just as sure as the Law of Gravitation. Here it is: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

### XXX

## The Biggest Word in the Dictionary

**T**HE biggest word in the dictionary—  
What is it?

It all depends on what you mean by "big." If you mean the longest word you can take down your dictionary and begin to count letters and find the longest one, after looking for two or three days. I do not know just what the longest word is, though I have discovered some words that stretch out so long on the page that it looks as though the printer had dumped the whole type case upside down in an effort to spell them. One of the longest words in the dictionary in good standing is "antitransubstantiationist"—twenty-seven letters. It sounds more like an after dinner speech than just a word. The word "tintinabulation," which means something, I am sure, though few know or care just what, makes a smaller mouthful, but still one quite sufficient.

The long words are never the words that count most. They are never, in the true

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sense of the term, the large words. The words that count most are all short, stubby words, like home, love, wife, child, work, play, food, sky, life, God.

There is a stage in the progress of most people when it seems smart and clever to use long words. It is a childish stage of development, which most people pass through safely, like coming through the measles or whooping cough. But some people never get through that stage. They stick there. They think it is a sign of education to use the longest words they can find. It is never a sign of anything but childishness. The best educated man is the one who can use the shortest words in a way that makes them say most.

If, by the biggest word in the dictionary, we mean the one most important for us, which is just what I do mean, it calls for a very different answer.

The biggest word will be the one that will make the biggest difference to us—that will either cause us the most trouble or represent the greatest gain to us. On that basis, the “biggest” word I have ever found in the dictionary is a word of two letters—If.

As you and I look out over the years that are still ahead of us and think of the possibilities they may hold for us, there are many

fields which look attractive and to which we are strongly drawn, but we find that the entrance to every one of them is through this narrow little door—If. We have to answer the stern, forbidding challenge of that word—If, before we can enter on the fields of our desire. We can do this—If —; we can get there—If —; we can be that—If —.

Rudyard Kipling said a few things about this word "If" in a way that sticks to a man. I memorized the poem in which he says them about five years ago, and I have never forgotten it. You see, I don't get a chance to forget, for I think of it nearly every day. I think it is one of the things that is worth carrying around with you, not in your hat, the way a policeman carries orders, but in your head. Here it is :

- " If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you  
But make allowance for their doubting too ;  
If you can wait, and not get tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, or talk too wise :
- " If you can dream—and not make dreams your  
master ;  
If you can think—and not make thought your  
aim,  
If you can meet with triumph and disaster



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And treat those two impostors just the same ;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools ;  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out  
tools :

“ If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common  
touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you but none too much ;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—You'll be a Man, my  
son.”

There are many great big “ifs” there. So many that a person may well be tempted to throw up his hands and say, “Who could do all that?” But there is no need for despair. It's a life job, to be sure, but the finest thing any one can have is a task that taxes all his powers.

There are three big *Ifs* I would like you to remember particularly.

*Keeping Your Head.* “If you can keep your head.” In Kipling's book this poem follows a story about George Washington and grows out of it. When Washington was President of the United States, the majority of the people in the country

wanted him to go to war with France. They were excited and hysterical and when they were unable to stampede him into their way of thinking, or rather, of *not* thinking, they began to call him names. But after the country had "cooled off" a few months later, they saw that he had been right and they had been wrong. Washington came to a place of great leadership because he could keep his head level and cool.

Did you ever see a cattle stampede? It usually starts in some scare and frequently carries along hundreds of cattle to destruction by trampling or running over a cliff. A "man stampede" is just as strange and unreasonable. Men are swept along by the force of others' unthinking action and immense harm is done. A man who can stand still and keep a level head instead of having it tipped up to such a slant that it cannot hold a single idea has laid the foundations of most any kind of success.

*The Strong Heart.* "If you can wait ——" I think that is about the hardest thing in the world to do. Fight? Work? Those things are easy compared to waiting and not giving up to discouragement! Yet waiting is a large part of most successes. Alexander Graham Bell walked the streets for weeks

trying to sell a half interest in the telephone for five hundred dollars. Think of it! It is worth millions to-day. He had no takers. Nevertheless he held on. He could "wait and not get tired of waiting." Last year he talked from New York to San Francisco with the same man with whom he held the first telephone conversation in Boston almost fifty years before.

*The Unspoiled Disposition.* "Or being hated, don't give way to hating." That is, if you can go through hard experiences without becoming bitter or sour and so spoil your own happiness and dwindle down into a small size man, you have come to that fine place where no one can ever make you miserable except yourself.

## XXXI

### Methusaleh

A GOOD many years ago Mark Twain was asked to make a talk to the children of a public school near his home in Hartford, Conn. He went over and spoke to the children on "Methusaleh." What he said to them was, in substance, this: "The Bible tells us that Methusaleh lived for 969 years. That is all he ever did so far as we know. Who would want to be Methusaleh? There was nothing doing."

That speech, like most of the things which Mark Twain said, is worth remembering, for it holds up this proposition, which I think is a sound one, that life is hardly worth while where there is nothing "doing." And I want you to remember Methusaleh's name, because his life, the longest one ever mentioned, was nevertheless a failure because it had only one dimension—length.

The "something doing" which makes life worth while never comes by reason of length. It always comes in the other dimensions of a man's life—breadth and height.

What makes up the "something doing" which makes life worth while, however, depends a good deal on the man. When one man says of a life that there is nothing in it, it often simply means that he is too stupid to see it. Some men would say that a quiet life like that of a scientist like Pasteur, for instance, whose discoveries have enabled millions of people to escape the scourge of disease, had "nothing doing" in it because it had no bustle or noise or excitement. Whereas the truth is, of course, that it was one of the most important lives ever lived, infinitely more important to the world than the life of Napoleon. It had breadth. Pasteur had a broad interest in human life and the concerns of men and women. It had height. He had a high purpose of saving life and making it more comfortable for others. Yet it was outwardly very quiet and uneventful.

Did you ever stop to think of how much trouble the simple business of living is? I do not wonder that a great many people get tired of it, when all they have is something to live on, and very little or nothing to live for. Just think of the bothersome details of living. If you live to be seventy years old, which you ought to do, it will mean that you

will have to shave 18,250 times, allowing once a day for fifty years. You will have to put on your clothes and put them off again 51,380 times—almost four solid months of it! And those are only a few of the details. Surely your life must contain something valuable to make it worth while. Mere length of time—just going on and on—will never do it.

A salesman shot himself in a hotel in Cincinnati two or three years ago. He was thirty-six years old, a bachelor, earning a good salary with a reputation as a "good liver" and "man about town." He left a note saying he was "tired of the game." Tired of the game! Why, he was never in the game! Living just to himself and spending all his money on himself—that is not the "game" of life! The "game," that has zest and interest and value in it, is a life with and for others; helped by them and helping them; dependent on them and having them dependent on you; reaching out into other lives with a broad human interest and sympathy.

The question, How broad is your life? is a much more important one than how long it is. I know that the lives of all of us are outwardly narrow. The circumstances of our

work keep us from roaming over as broad a territory as we would like. Yet a man can live a broad life and be quite stationary. How many things do you care about? How many different kinds of things can you enjoy? Do you care about things outside of your city, town or state? The answers we make to these questions determine how broad and hence how much worth while our lives are.

There is still another direction—*height*. Don't be a Methusaleh by having life just stretch on and on without stretching up, by striving for better things. A man's life is high when he has an ideal that he puts before him and tries to reach it, when he is willing to sacrifice for that ideal. Let me make this idea of height clear. The life of Nathan Hale, who was hung as a spy during the Revolution, was very short. He was barely thirty when he met death. It was a short life—but it was high. He gladly gave his life for his country. He stretched up to a great ideal when he said, "My only regret is that I have but one life to give to my country." He really *lived* more in that hour than many people do in seventy years. His thirty years were worth more, on account of the quality of his purpose, both to himself and to his

country, than any number of stupid and selfish lives of ninety years. That is the only true way to count time. Not how long, but how much? How high do one's ideals go, and how earnestly does he desire some good quality in his life?

We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not  
breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart throbs.  
He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

It is very strange that our common phrase, "high life" nearly always means low things. "High living" means eating, drinking and dissipation. The higher "living" a man does, the lower down he is in his tastes. It is a very foolish use of words. There is only one kind of "high life" that deserves the name. That is, reaching up for the best one knows and moving up a little nearer to it every day.



## XXXII

### Why Do a Cat's Eyes Shine in the Dark?

**T**HE little girl who lives across the street from me came over the other night and wanted an answer to one of those "why" questions which children are continually asking us. I did not know the answer and I do not believe you can do any better than I did. Here is the question: Why do a cat's eyes shine in the dark?

I had a harder time finding out than I looked for. I asked the neighbors up and down the street and they didn't know any more than I did. I asked a professor I knew but he said that was not in his department.

At last after two or three days I found the answer in an encyclopedia, and went gleefully to tell the little girl about it but she was quite disappointed. She thought the answer was stranger than the question, and, to tell the truth, so do I myself. The answer to the question, Why do a cat's eyes shine in the dark? is this: *They don't.*

That does not seem to fit, but it is correct. The common impression is that there is something in a cat's eye which is luminous or light-giving in itself, like phosphorus, or a little electric flash which enables the cat to see, and which makes the eyes shine. This is a mistake. There is nothing luminous in themselves in a cat's eyes. The pupil of the eye expands to a far greater degree than in a human eye, and consequently the eye is able to collect every possible bit of light that there is. Now, contrary to general belief, absolute pitch darkness is a very rare thing. Most places which seem devoid of any light are not so. There is some light there, if it can only be collected. A cat's eye collects all that there is even in places where there seems to be absolutely none. It collects a surprising amount, and by reflecting it, the eyes appear to be luminous.

Perhaps the length of time it took me to find this out has caused me to think a good deal about it since and the more I think about it the more it seems worth remembering.

It is interesting, for instance, to know that many places which seem to be absolutely dark are not so; there is enough light to use and get around by if one can only get all

there is and use it as a cat does. I have never been fond of cats, but I think this power in a cat is a good thing to remember: *When you get all the light in a dark place, there is a good deal more than you think at first.*

Here is a man, for instance, who has got into a situation that looks pretty black. The tendency, and you can hardly blame him for it, is either to "throw up the sponge" and quit trying, or to become bitter and morose. There is a better thing to do than either of these,—do what the cat does—get every possible bit of light that there is in the dark situation and the chances are that one will find that there is enough light to see a way out. Men have worked their way out of seemingly hopeless difficulties and handicaps, simply by using to the fullest extent the little bit of advantage or opportunity they had.

I think of this often in connection with another situation where we all find ourselves more or less in the dark. There are a great many things in the world about which we would all like to know more. I mean about the great mysteries of life and death and the hereafter. We would all like to know more about the future life, whether there is any future life, and what it is like. Nearly every

man has wished he knew more about God, what the great Power behind the universe really is. In most of these questions we seem to be a good deal in the dark.

For that reason many men try to dismiss the whole question of religion from their minds. I think they make a great mistake. There are other men who act in another way. They say: We do not know *everything* we would like to know, but we do know *something*. We will act on what we do know and see if we can increase our knowledge by acting. Many men under strong temptation have said, Whatever may be doubted about great questions, we know that it is better to be brave than to be a coward, better to tell the truth than to lie, better to be pure than to be unclean. There can be no doubt about these things in the mind of any right-thinking man. So they have followed what clear moral light they have had on these great matters of practical living, and as they have done so, other things have become more clear and sure. They have proved in their own experience that Jesus was telling the truth when He said, "If any man will to do my will, he shall know of the doctrine."





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